4058.

A COLLECTION OF LETTERS ON PATRONAGE AND POPULAR ELECTION:

SOME OF WHICH HAVE APPEARED IN THE PUBLIC PRINTS, AND ARE NOW ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES;

OTHERS NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED:

CONTAINING

THE ARGUMENTS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE PRESENT CONTROVERSY,

AS PRODUCED BY THE RESPECTIVE PARTIES THEMSELVES

WHEREIN

Are many ARTICLES from the Fathers, from eminent Scripture-Critics, and from Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, rarely to be met with in *Modern Publications* on that Subject.

The whole breathing a Spirit of Candour and Moderation, very inſtructive and entertaining, and peculiarly neceſſary for all who intereſt themſelves in the DEBATE ABOUT PATRONAGE; and promiſing entire ſatisfaction to them on that *Head*.

——The children of Iſſachar——were men that had underſtanding of the times, to know what Iſrael ought to do. 1 Chron. xii. 32.
——A wiſe man's heart diſcerneth both time and judgment. Eccleſ. viii. 5.

EDINBURGH:
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MDCCLXXXIII.
[Price Sixpence.]

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE HONOURABLE

PELHAM MAITLAND, Esq.

OF BELMOUNT:

AND TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETIES

AT

EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW,

Conſtituted for the purpoſe of obtaining the Repeal of the preſent Patronage-Law.

GENTLEMEN,

THE ſtand you have made for Eccleſiaſtical Liberty juſtly entitles you to claim the patronage of the enſuing Collection. In it, the partiſans on both ſides preſent themſelves, and give the arguments for their reſpective opinions, in perſon. They cannot, therefore, complain, that any injury is done them by unfair quotation. The popular arguments from Scripture and antiquity are more largely treated here than in any other modern publication, (ſo far as known to the Publiſher;) ſame time, with a ſpirit of candour and moderation, that muſt be very agreeable to thoſe of a contrary opinion. The propoſers of them ſeem rather to act the hiſtorian than the diſputant; and expoſe even the weakneſſes, as well as the ſtrength of their cauſe.

Every argument of conſequence, on both ſides, is here handled with that comprehenſive brevity, which tends to give a full view without fatiguing the mind: So that any Gentleman, by means of this, may become

maſter

maſter of all the parts of the controverſy in an hour or two.

Several of theſe Letters have appeared in the *Caledonian Mercury;* theſe are now illuſtrated with Notes, by the Author of the Letters on Patronage, that appeared under the ſignature of PHILANTHROPOS. Some Letters, never before publiſhed, are added by the ſame hand. In theſe laſt, the caſe is argued from reaſon; the right of Patrons is conſidered; thoughts are offered on a plan, and ſome ſeaſonable cautions to the Friends of the People, as to unanimity among themſelves.

This publication would have made its appearance in November or December laſt, as the materials were then collected: but the diſtreſs on the country, by the dearth and ſcarcity, then neceſſarily occupying the minds of all ranks, any attempt of this ſort was reckoned, at that time, unſeaſonable.

But as the ſubject-matter of the Collection will, no doubt, be a-new debated at the enſuing General Aſſembly, and as the affair it reſpects hangs ſtill in ſuſpenſe, it has, therefore, been thought very ſeaſonable to publiſh it at preſent. I am, 4 OC 58

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt humble,

And moſt obedient ſervant,

THE PUBLISHER.

Feb. 20. 1783.

LETTERS ON PATRONAGE AND POPULAR ELECTION.

LETTER I.

To the Printer of the Caledonian Mercury, May 22. 1782.

SIR,

I Beg leave, through the channel of your paper, to offer ſome thoughts on the conſequences of the abolition of Patronage, ſhould it be applied for, and obtained.

We ought not to entertain too ſanguine hopes though popular election could be again reſtored. Power in the hands of the populace, through the weakneſs of human nature, often occaſions debates: it would be ſo here. From a point of humour, ſome would leave the Church; and, when numerous, erect new chapels, becauſe they got not out their will in theſe elections. Again, from the dependence of one part of the community upon the other, elections, eſpecially in country pariſhes, would often be much influenced ſtill by people in higher life. Nor can it be denied, that in many places the people are very unfit to make a proper uſe of this right, though they had it. Nevertheleſs, as a friend to mankind, I muſt give my voice in favour of popular election.

Should this right be reſtored, though it would have no influence on Roman Catholics, or the two bodies of Epiſcopals, it would doubtleſs reconcile many Preſbyterian Diſſenters to the Church; and ſuch a coaleſcence would be to the honour and intereſt of Chriſtianity in this part of the iſland.

These Diſſenters, who complain of other things beſide Patronage *, would not be wholly reduced by it; but it would, in time, moſtly annihilate that ſort who complain chiefly of it and its conſequences †; and we may be certain it would prevent the increaſe of all ſorts of Preſbyterian Diſſenters, and even diminiſh the preſent number. It would often have a good effect within the Church alſo, by making young clergymen more attentive to their ſtudies and their conduct, as they would know that their preferment muſt depend on their merit; and as mankind will always ſtudy to pleaſe them on whom they depend, it would make them accommodate themſelves more to the common people.

Perhaps the preſent is the moment when the abolition of Patronage may be obtained, when we have a Miniſtry that are friends to the natural rights of mankind. It therefore were to be wiſhed, that proper exertions for that purpoſe were timeouſly made. To remove a principal obſtacle, might not ſome compenſation be made to patrons, that they may give their right in favours of the people, as was done in the act of King William, aboliſhing Patronage? It is wiſhed that people of property would conſider, that if Patronage be not aboliſhed, the ſupport of religion in Scotland will, in time, become a weighty burden on the nation, through the great number of clergymen; as is the caſe in Popiſh countries §.

PHILANTHROPOS.

May 17th 1782.

* The reformed Preſbytery, called alſo Antigovernment People, Old Diſſenters, *&c.*; and the two bodies of Seceders, a party diſtinct from theſe.

† The Synod of Relief, at preſent the moſt formidable and ſucceſsful opponents of the national Church.

§ This Letter was publiſhed the day before the ſitting down of the laſt General Aſſembly.

LETTER

LETTER II.

To the Printer of the Caledonian Mercury, June 26. 1782.

SIR,

WE have been entertained, for ſome weeks paſt, with advertiſements in the news-papers relative to the Patronage Law. The matter has not made much noiſe as yet, but, by the end of a few months, may, perhaps, produce aſſociations as formidable as thoſe which oppoſed the repeal of the laws againſt Popery. By the voice of the public, it would ſeem a matter of much importance. It will not, therefore, be wondered at, if much is both ſaid and wrote on the ſubject, though, perhaps, neither to the purpoſe, nor ending in conviction. Permit me for once, Sir, to conſider myſelf as one of the many writers whom the ſubject may draw into print; and if you do not think my ſentiments totally inadmiſſible, give them, I pray you, a place in your paper.

To make what I have to ſay as ſhort as poſſible, I ſhall confine myſelf to the diſcuſſion of thoſe arguments on which the neceſſity of the repeal of the Patronage Law hath been hitherto reſted, and which have been particularly held out to the public in the advertiſements above mentioned.

It hath been ſaid, That it is contrary to reaſon not to allow a congregation to chuſe their paſtor. As reaſon is given us to direct us to what is right, nothing can be ſaid to be contrary to it that is moſt conducive to any propoſed end. Now, the queſtion is, Whether a preſentation, or a popular election, would be the moſt proper means of ſupplying a congregation with a miniſter? If we trace the practice back through a few of the ages neareſt our own, we will not find that popular elections prevailed. During the eſtabliſhment of Popery, and of Epiſcopacy, which followed, either the clergy, or individuals among the laity, had the nomination of paſtors to parochial charges; and this has ever continued to be the caſe, unleſs in ſome inſtances wherein

this privilege was torn from them by ſome convulſion either in Church or State. This privilege, however, in ſueh hands, may, perhaps, be conſidered as an encroachment on the natural rights of the people; and, theréfore, theſe, it may be ſaid, are juſtified in attempting to regain what they have loſt. If the chuſing their own paſtors had ever been their right, we would certainly find ſome proofs of it in the common practice of the Church, in ſome age or other. Whether the people had this privilege in the primitive times, I ſhall conſider afterwards: In later ages, as I before obſerved, we find it was not. This is, at leaſt, a ſtrong preſumption againſt the right the people claim.

As it is pretended that this privilege, of appointing a paſtor in the hands of a patron or ſingle perſon, is contrary to reaſon, let us ſuppoſe the people poſſeſſed of it, and then ſee how far reaſon will be conſulted in their procedure. If the people are entitled to the right of election, then every Chriſtian, without exception, has equally the ſame right. But the enemies to Patronage ſay, That this right ſhould be veſted only in the heads of families; hence every unmarried man and woman in the pariſh are treated like beaſts. If the head of a family may be ſuppoſed anxious for the ſalvation of his ſoul, may not this be admitted in regard to every perſon in the pariſh? And if this concern for his ſalvation entitles a married perſon to a vote, why may it not alſo qualify an unmarried one? The one can have no better right in reaſon than the other, unleſs by his poſſeſſing, perhaps, more property than the other, he becomes more an object of a paſtor's care. It is true, *they that have riches can hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, and, therefore, require more attention paid to them.

If the people of a pariſh were to meet for the election of a miniſter, that perſon would be preferred who had the votes of a majority. But if reaſon allowed every perſon to chuſe a paſtor for himſelf, the minority in this caſe, would find reaſon ſet aſide, and a paſtor they did not chuſe forced upon them. In a pariſh where there are 1000 perſons entitled to vote, 501 would carry the election againſt 499; thus the one half of the pariſh, except one, would have a miniſter they did not like

like, and conſequently would be diſobliged. In a pariſh where there are 500 perſons, including the patron, a preſentation would only, at the worſt, force a miniſter upon 499, a caſe by no means ſo bad as the other: For no patron has the whole pariſh againſt him; and where people are not allowed to vote, they are not ſo much offended as if they were allowed to vote, and their vote did not avail *. Or, where they are diſobliged, becauſe they were not allowed to vote, they are more eaſily reconciled to their patron, than they would be to their opponents in the other caſe. Where all cannot vote then, or where all could not agree, the right of preſenting is much better placed in the hands of one than of many.

But, in fact, the queſtion in diſpute is not, Whether the patron, or the pariſh, ſhall appoint a paſtor to the congregation? but, Whether the patron or the pariſh ſhall preſent a miniſter to ſuch a church, and the living annexed to it †? In this point of view, it muſt be owned, the patron has the beſt right. But how did he acquire this right? Did he wreſt it out of the hands of the people? No. His anceſtors, or theirs from whom he acquired the right, either built the church, and granted a part of their eſtate for the maintenance of the paſtor; or gave large donations to a church, otherwiſe poor, on

* Among unprincipled people, this no doubt will often be the caſe. But notwithſtanding, even in ſuch a caſe as is here ſuppoſed, the election would be a free election, and merit would have a fairer trial than under patronage: and it is to be noticed, that to attain this laſt is the main end of popular election.

† Perhaps there is ſomething in this diſtinction. The congregation are not compelled by law to accept the preſentee for their miniſter; but in caſe they do not like him, they ſtill have the liberty left them of chooſing another for themſelves, if they will be at the expence of ſupporting him and of erecting a new place of worſhip for him. The Government will not, in this caſe, hinder the people from waring their money in the way moſt agreeable to themſelves.

But let it be conſidered, That it is the part of every wiſe ſtate to prevent, as far as poſſible, every occaſion of ſuch *double burdens* upon the people.

condition of having the privilege of preſentation *. In many pariſhes in Scotland, all or moſt of the lands are the property of the patron; and in many pariſhes again, the patron has no property, or but very little. In this laſt caſe, it would appear from reaſon, according to ſome, that the patron could have no right to preſent. The want of territory, however, is no argument againſt his right. This very privilege muſt be conſidered as property; as property either acquired by an equivalent, or as property preſerved from the ruins of a fortune. A man may divide his property as he pleaſes. He may ſell his lands and keep his patronage, or *vice verſa*. Whatever may be the nature of his property, it is equally ſacred; and it is certain Government could not invade it with any regard to juſtice, though the whole kingdom ſhould addreſs the Legiſlature for that purpoſe.

But, ſay the people, it is not the patron, but ourſelves that pay the miniſter; and therefore we ſhould have the privilege of chooſing him. If all the lands in a pariſh are mine, it is certain that there is no fixed property in it, ſubject to any kind of public burden, that I have not a right to. If I chooſe to take the whole of theſe lands into my own hand, my tenants are removed, and there remain no perſons in the pariſh but the miniſter and myſelf, and our families. When the pariſh contained perhaps 1000 perſons, the miniſter got his ſtipend; when theſe are gone, he gets no leſs: And if the pariſh ſhould again be as populous, he gets the ſame, and no more. Hence it appears, that the miniſter draws his ſtipend from the lands, and not from the tenants in the pariſh. I let a farm to a tenant, which, in my own mind, I value at twenty pounds. I tell him he muſt pay me nineteen pounds ten ſhillings, and pay ten ſhillings of ſtipend to the miniſter. It will not ſurely be ſaid, then, that the tenant, though he delivers the money, is at the expence of the miniſter's ſtipend. The ſame reaſoning is equally concluſive, where the patron has no territorial property in the pariſh; for it muſt al-

* For a view of the right of the patron, and a ſolution of the difficulties on that head, ſee Letter III. and Letter XIII.

ways

ways be ſuppoſed, that, where the patronage has been reſerved, an equivalent hath been given ſome way or other. As the tenants in a pariſh, then, pay no more money &c. to the miniſter or their landlord, than the ſuppoſed value of their farms, they do not pay their paſtor, and on this footing have no right to chooſe him.

In the above-mentioned caſe, wherein I have ſuppoſed myſelf both patron and proprietor of all the lands in the pariſh, it might happen that this year there is a vacancy in the paſtoral charge. The next year all my tenants leaſes expire, and I have let my whole eſtate to new tenants, which will make a total change of inhabitants in the pariſh. I give a preſentation to the church and living. The preſent tenants tell me, that the miniſter I have preſented is not to their liking, and they will not receive him. By what rule are theſe perſons entitled to object to a ſettlement which will not affect them, one way or other, above a twelvemonth? Might not the new tenants tell me, We are not inhabitants of this pariſh juſt now, but we expect to be ſo ſoon, and you muſt give us a miniſter to *our* liking? It will be ſaid, perhaps, that ſuch a revolution will never take place in a pariſh. It happens every year, in ſome degree. Some inhabitants are going out, and ſome are coming in. If they who go out chooſe the miniſter, they who come in have a miniſter forced upon them, at leaſt one whom they did not chooſe. If they who are to come in join with thoſe that are to continue in the pariſh in the election of a miniſter, they who are to go out have a miniſter forced upon them while they ſtay. It is impoſſible, then, to ſuppoſe a caſe wherein the right of ſome will not be invaded, if all who are to be part of a congregation have a right, in nature and reaſon, to chooſe their paſtor. So that as this muſt happen in popular elections, and as a congregation would never be unanimous in their choice, to prevent thoſe broils which would unavoidably ariſe in every pariſh, to the ſcandal of religion, and deſtruction of public peace and order, reaſon muſt teach us, that it is better to owe our miniſter to a preſentation than to a popular election*.

Another

* Patronage has been the occaſion of more ſtrife and diſorder in

Another popular argument uſed againſt Patronage is, "The people would chooſe better for themſelves than the patron does:" This would not be the caſe; at leaſt, it is entirely problematical. In every pariſh, there are perſons of different taſtes, tempers, and diſpoſitions. What would pleaſe one, would offend another. Every one would think his own opinion beſt, in regard to the qualifications of a paſtor. Every one would judge. All could not be gratified. Few would be pleaſed. Some would wiſh their miniſter lunged like a Stentor. Others admire a ſoft and eaſy delivery. Some are beſt pleaſed with ſound reaſoning and good ſenſe, though diveſted of flowery language. Others again are more taken with this, let the ſenſe follow when it pleaſes. How ſhall all theſe taſtes be gratified? Not by any one man.

But pray, Sir, What great evil is it that this ſame Patronage Law brings upon the people? The patron ſays to them, "Gentlemen, I am informed that Mr ſuch a one is qualified for ſerving the cure of a pariſh; and I therefore preſent him to my church, and the living annexed to it." Did the patron conſtitute himſelf judge of the preſentee's qualifications, and make him their paſtor at his own hand, the people, I own, would have very juſt cauſe of complaint; but, as the matter ſtands, they have none at all. The perſon preſented has been tried by the preſbytery. The preſbytery, by licenſing him, have told all the world that he is qualified for a miniſter of the goſpel; and therefore, if it ſhould afterwards appear that he does not poſſeſs the proper talents, the preſbytery, and not the patron, ſhould bear the blame.—With a very ill grace, then, do any of the clergy cry out againſt Pre-

in Scotland than popular election ever was, in an equal period of time: and Scotland has had a trial of them both. It is acknowledged, however, that as to all modes of providing congregations with miniſters, it may be too juſtly ſaid, That no plan can be invented that will be free from every inconvenience; through man's imperfection, even the beſt inſtitutions will be liable to abuſe. But, in this caſe, the plan that is attended with the feweſt evils, and which upon the whole promiſes the moſt good, muſt undoubtedly be the beſt one. And ſuch, I believe, popular election, on a more or leſs extended ſcale, will be generally found to be. See Letter V. and eſpecially Letters XI. and XII.

ſentations.

ſentations. No perſon can be preſented till he comes through their hands; and if they throw an improper one in the way of a patron or a pariſh, they muſt be anſwerable for all the ill conſequences*.

It will be ſaid, perhaps, that the Preſbytery dare not refuſe to licenſe any perſon who has a ſufficient fund of learning, and whoſe moral character cannot be impeached. If theſe are not the only requiſites, why do the Synod or General Aſſembly put ſuch violence upon the Preſbytery? The Synod, or General Aſſembly, then, if not the Preſbytery, are in the fault, but by no means the patron.—The clergy have it in their power to cure the evil. The General Aſſembly ſhould make ſuch regulations as may prevent unqualified perſons getting into pariſhes; and if they do not, let not the patrons be blamed for preſenting their licentiates; and let not the clergy tell the people, with ſo little truth, that preſentations are the cauſe of their getting improper perſons for their miniſters. It is poſſible a young man may be fit for one pariſh, and not for another†: the Preſbytery would do well, in ſuch a caſe, to ſignify in his licenſe what kind of charge he is fit for.—In England, no biſhop ordains a clergyman till he hath the certain proſpect of a cure, otherwiſe he is obliged to ſupport him. If this were introduced into Scotland; if the Preſbytery were not allowed to licenſe any perſon till he knew of a kirk, unleſs they would contribute for his ſubſiſtance, we ſhould not have ſo many young fellows going through the country ſetting ignorant people by the ears‡.

In another letter, Sir, if you admit this, I ſhall conſider how far Patronage is contrary to the practice of the

* Patronage lays *a ſtumbl'ng-block* in the clergy's way, yea is like *a mill-ſtone hanged about their necks*. Their refuſing licenſe to young men whoſe friends have intereſt with the Patrons, might, not ſeldom, be attended with conſequences not the moſt agreeable to themſelves or their friends. See the latter part of Letter XII.

† A very juſt remark.

‡ If the planting churches by Patronage ſtill continue to be the law, this might ſuit well enough; but under any kind of popular election, which requires *a trial* by *hearing* before giving a call, it would not anſwer.

primitive

primitive church, which its enemies ſay it is. In the mean time, I am, &c.

G. C.

LETTER III.

To the Printer of the Caledonian Mercury, Aug. 7. 1782.

SIR,

PERUSING your paper lately, I obſerved a letter on the ſubject of Patronage, ſigned G. C. in which the writer attempts to vindicate the preſent mode of preſentation, and to obviate ſome of the objections commonly urged againſt it; an anſwer to which appeared in your paper ſince that time, but, in my opinion, neither ſufficiently full nor ſatisfactory. I have been induced to defer anſwering G. C. till now, from a promiſe of another letter on the ſame ſubject, which has never yet made its appearance. How far he has ſucceeded in his firſt eſſay, we now beg leave to enquire.

The queſtion which he ſtates, as the ground of diſpute, is, "Whether a preſentation or popular election "would be the moſt proper means of ſupplying a con-"gregation with a miniſter?" The firſt argument which he advances to prove, that the people have no right to elect their own paſtor, is this, That the people never poſſeſſed this right. "If we trace the practice "back, (ſays he) through a few ages neareſt our own, "we will not find that popular election ever prevailed." He adds, "If the chooſing of paſtors had ever been the "right of the people, we ſhould certainly find ſome "proofs of it in the common practice of the Church, "in ſome age or other." And do we not, Mr G. C. find many proofs of this right having been in the hands of the people? Did not the apoſtles and diſciples meet for the nomination of ſuch as might be elected to the apoſtleſhip? and were not the deacons elected by the multitude of the diſciples? Did not Paul and Barnabas,

by

by ſuffrages, ordain elders in every Church? (Acts xiv. 23.) for the word in the original ſignifies *to ordain by votes*. Conſult eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and you will find, that this practice prevailed alſo in ſucceeding ages of the Church. In the ſecond Council of Orleans, in 533, it was ordained, "That Metropolitans ſhould be choſen by all the provincial biſhops, clergy, and people." And though the Kings of France aſſumed to themſelves a right of electing biſhops, yet a Synod in Avergni, in 535, decreed, That a biſhop ſhould be raiſed by the choice of the whole body; and the election of the clergy and citizens is declared neceſſary. In the year 615, King Clotaire II. ſole Monarch of France, enacted, That all biſhops ſhould be ordained by the clergy and people. In the ſecond Nicene Council, aſſembled in the year 787, a decree was made, annulling all elections by Princes; and for this they quote one of the canons of the firſt Council of Nice. In the Synod of Rheims, 1049, it was decreed, That none ſhould be made a biſhop without the election of the clergy and people. It is not to be denied, indeed, that ſome inſtances occur of promotions taking place merely by the King's authority, without election; but ſtill the freedom of choice was maintained: The error was in the practice, and not in the law.—Permit me now, Mr G. C. to add a few inſtances from the practice in our own country, even in the time of Popery. And here I ſhall uſe the authority of an author whom you will not ſuſpect as an enemy to Patronage, I mean Archbiſhop Spotiſwood, who informs us, that, in the 11th century, Cadmerus was elected biſhop of St Andrew's with the conſent of the clergy and laity: That, in the 13th century, the clergy and people of Aberdeen elected Matthew to be their biſhop; and that Angelramus, by the uniform conſent of clergy and laity, was elected biſhop of Glaſgow. I would beg of Mr G. C. to conſult Biſhop Burnet's book upon this ſubject, where he will find the moſt irrefragable proofs of popular elections having prevailed in almoſt every age of the Church.

G. C. conſiders, in the next place, the impropriety and inhamanity of reſtricting the privilege of voting in popular elections to heads of families only. "While

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" the right of voting (ſays he) is veſted in the heads of " families only, every unmarried man and woman are " treated like beaſts." Critics themſelves will be ready to allow, that the author merits the higheſt encomiums for the delicacy of his language. " If the concern for " a man's ſalvation (continues he) entitles a married " perſon to vote, why may it not qualify an unmarried " one? The one can have no better right than the o- " ther, unleſs by poſſeſſing more, he become more the " object of a paſtor's care. It is true, (ſays he) they " that have riches can hardly enter into the kingdom " of heaven, and therefore require more attention." The wit which our letter-writer diſplays in this quotation is too brilliant to eſcape the notice even of an inattentive reader. Let him have all the merit to which it can entitle him; I envy him not. But, in regard to this his objection, I muſt beg leave to inform him, that I am well convinced, were there no other ground of diſſention between the advocates and opponents of popular elections, he and I ſhould be eaſily reconciled. And I hope, that extending the privilege of voting to every one arrived at the age of maturity, would reſcue them from the debaſement of being claſſed with BEASTS.

After this G. C. proceeds to ſhew, that becauſe in popular elections we cannot pleaſe the whole, we ſhould endeavour to pleaſe none; or, at leaſt, that we ſhould hold their pleaſure or diſpleaſure as a matter of indifference. " In a pariſh," ſays he, " where there are 1000 " entitled to vote, 501 would carry the election againſt " 499: Thus the one half of the pariſh would be diſ- " obliged. In a pariſh (continues he,) where there are " 500 perſons, including the patron, a preſentation could " only, at the worſt, force a miniſter upon 499, a caſe " by no means ſo bad as the other." Hence he infers, that " where all cannot agree, the right of preſenting is " much better placed in the hands of one than of many." The abſurdity of this reaſoning is too glaring to need refutation. Surely it is better to pleaſe more than one half of a pariſh, than to pleaſe only one of 500. His reaſon for ſuppoſing 1000 in one caſe, and 500 in the other, I cannot conceive.

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In the next argument of this writer, he conſiders a preſentation to a congregation, and a preſentation to a living, as two diſtinct things. "It is not," ſays he, "Whether the patron or pariſh ſhall preſent to a con-"gregation, but whether the patron or pariſh ſhall pre-"ſent to a church and the living annexed to it." Conſidering it in the latter point of view, (I mean as a preſentation to a living,) he affirms the patron has the beſt right. Why ſo? "Becauſe his anceſtors, or theirs from "whom he acquired the right, either built the church, "and granted part of their eſtate for the maintenance "of the paſtor, or gave large donations to a church "otherwiſe poor, on condition of having the privilege "of preſentation. In anſwer to this, I would obſerve, *1ſt*, That the patron's pretence of a reſervation or agreement of this nature, unleſs it be produced, cannot be ſuſtained, as it is ſubverſive of liberty; for all ſervitudes (and Patronages are to be regarded as ſuch) are never preſumed, but muſt be poſitively inſtructed. *2dly*, It is undeniable, that Patronages in general are grounded upon mere cuſtom, without the leaſt pretenſions to any reſervation or agreement of this nature. *3dly*, The Canoniſts, by informing us that "the Pope often conferred this right on whom he thought proper, though they had never beſtowed a farthing on a church," clearly evince, that the right or privilege of Patronage was not always conferred on thoſe who had endowed a church.

G. C. next proceeds to remove the objection ſometimes urged againſt Patronages, *viz.* "That the people, "and not the heritor, pay the ſtipend, and that they are "conſequently entitled to elect their paſtor." I will readily admit that this objection can have no force, and that the miniſter's ſtipend is paid from the heritor's property; but ſtill this cannot entitle him to preſent a paſtor, as I have already ſhewn, that the right of Patronage was not always conferred on thoſe who endowed a church, unleſs he can prove, that his anceſtors endowed the church to which he is to preſent, upon condition of having this privilege.

In anſwer to his next objection to popular elections, I would obſerve, that the perſons who may perhaps come into a pariſh which has a ſettled paſtor, and in whoſe

election they had no vote, as they were not reſiding in the pariſh when he was elected, are generally few, and bear a ſmall proportion to the reſt of the pariſh. In regard to what he ſays concerning the diverſity of taſtes in a pariſh, and the difficulty of getting a clergyman agreeable to them all, I would obſerve, that when the paſtor is choſen by the voice of the people, it is highly probable that the majority will be pleaſed.

The improvement which G. C. recommends of the preſent mode of licenſing, is, in my opinion, judicious, and ſhould be adopted. Your's,

Aberdeen, July 20. 1782. A. B.

LETTER IV.

To the Printer of the Caledonian Mercury, Aug. 12. 1782.

SIR,

IN this letter I am to conſider how far Patronage, as is pretended, is contrary to the practice of the primitive Church; and, in doing this, I ſhall ſpeak my ſentiments with freedom. If, in the courſe of this ſubject, any thing may drop from my pen contrary to the wiſhes of the people, or eſtabliſhed forms, impute it to the love of truth, which will never ſhake hands with faſhionable errors, nor flatter the humours of the multitude. If any objections ſhall be made to what I may advance, I hope the evidence, on which ſuch objections ſhall be founded, will be produced.

If we ſearch the Scriptures for the practice in the apoſtolic age, we will find nothing having the ſmalleſt appearance of a popular election, except the chooſing of the ſeven Deacons may be called ſuch. In this caſe, the Apoſtles, addreſſing themſelves to the Diſciples, deſired them to *look out ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the Holy Ghoſt and wiſdom,* whom they (the Apoſtles) might ordain. But this contains no argumennt againſt Patronage: For it amounts to no more than what we may call, in the language of our Church, *moderating their call;* that is to ſay, chooſing the number of

of men preſcribed by the Apoſtles againſt whoſe character there could be nothing objected. The difference between that caſe and the preſent practice is this: The people, in chooſing the Deacons, *affirmed* the perſons preſented *to* the Apoſtles to be men of honeſt report. The people now *deny* the perſons preſented *by* the Clergy or Patrons to be men of honeſt report, when there is ground for this; and therefore the people now are as much electors as the people were in the caſe of the Deacons.

But when we conſider attentively the hiſtory of the Church, as handed down to us in the Acts of the Apoſtles, and in thoſe paſſages of the Epiſtles which relate to its diſcipline, we find that the Apoſtles, and thoſe who were appointed by them to the government of particular churches, as Timothy and Titus, acted altogether arbitrarily in the ordination and ſettling of paſtors. We know Paul, whoſe travels are more particularly related to us than thoſe of the other Apoſtles, ordained Elders or Preſbyters in every city where he made converts; and there is not the ſmalleſt mention made of his conſulting the people. Some of the people then, as is now much the practice, attached themſelves to different paſtors, according to the various whims by which they were guided. Some choſe Paul, others Apollos; and this, no doubt, they might have ſaid, was their privilege, with as much truth as we do at preſent to excuſe *our* fickleneſs. But what did the Apoſtle upon this occaſion? Did he own the people's right to chooſe their own miniſters, and forbear to preach to thoſe who wanted to have Apollos for their paſtor? No. It ſeems the Apoſtle was not very well verſed in theſe matters; for when he heard of the ſtir the Corinthians made about their miniſters, he rebuked them very ſharply, and told them, *they were carnal*, and *walked as men;* a ſad ſtigma in thoſe days among Chriſtians, ſince to be called a *man*, meant a perſon in a ſtate of ſin and miſery, and not ſubject to the perfect law of God. This, then, muſt have been a terrible infringement of the people's liberties, according to the preſent logic. Why do not the enemies to Patronage ſhew this paſſage to be interpolated?

1 Cor. iii. 26.

We may, perhaps, be told, "The Apoſtle's manner was the more allowable, and that of the Corinthians leſs to be excuſed, ſince paſtors in theſe days were men of eminent gifts, whoſe talents would anſwer every wiſh the people could form." This was not the opinion then. This ſame Apoſtle, whoſe writings have been admired in every age, and to have heard whom preach was one of three wiſhes formed by a Father of antiquity, was not ſo popular as theſe circumſtances might make us imagine. The Corinthians, who ſeem to have been no better than ourſelves in ſome reſpects, conceived a very mean opinion of Paul's talents. Though they were forced to own, and even to tremble, at the force of his epiſtles; yet, ſaid they, *His bodily preſence is weak, and his ſpeech contemptible.* This was a ſad grievance. It came to the Apoſtle's ears; but, inſtead of gratifying the people, he threatens them with ſome cenſure for their unruly behaviour. *Let ſuch think this*, ſaith he, *that ſuch as we are in word by letters, when we are abſent, ſuch will we be alſo in deed when we are preſent.* Except the chooſing of the ſeven Deacons then, we will not find any thing like a popular election; but even that caſe can be made no argument againſt Patronage. Timothy is directed by the Apoſtle, how to chooſe fit perſons for the miniſtry; but there is no room for the people's voice in the matter, farther than that the candidates have their good word, or be men againſt whoſe characters the people could not object.

Shall we find any thing more to the purpoſe, by tracing the hiſtory of the Church down from the Apoſtle's age? Eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians afford us nothing either againſt Patronage, or indeed in any ſhape applicable to our religious eſtabliſhment. The Biſhops, whom theſe hiſtorians repreſent as the Apoſtles ſucceſſors in the government of the Church, followed exactly the example of their predeceſſors. They choſe men for the miniſtry. They ordained them. They ſet them to ſuch charges as they thought fit, and ſeem to have looked on this as their excluſive right, with which the people had no concern. This is plain, from their not conſulting the people, and from theſe ſubmitting quietly to

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it. Many inſtances indeed may be found in the hiſtory of the Church, of the clergy, upon the death of their Biſhop, chooſing a proper perſon from among themſelves, to ſucceed him, who was, immediately after his election, ordained, or conſecrated, by ſome neighbouring Biſhops.* It has been ſaid, that the people were admitted to give their opinion in theſe elections, but this hath been much doubted. Be that as it may, ſuch a caſe could not apply to our diſcipline.

From the time of the Apoſtles to the Reformation, there is no evidence, from the hiſtory of the Church, that the people were inveſted with the privilege of chooſing their paſtors. At this period, when Preſbytery was only in its infancy, both miniſters and people ſeem to have conducted themſelves upon principles very different from thoſe entertained now. At a time when both preachers and hearers run the riſk of being burned for heretics, the latter were leſs ſcrupulous in the choice of their miniſters. Whoever choſe to preach, let his talents be what they would, he was ſure of hearers. The miniſters, on the other hand, never enquired whether they were preaching in another perſon's pariſh; if they found hearers, they immediately found a text. When the induſtry of the preachers had prevailed ſo far as to gain a majority in the kingdom; when the people were thoroughly tired of Popiſh tyranny; and when they were become ſo formidable as to ſtipulate with Government; a form of Church policy was drawn up, and preſented to the Parliament for its confirmation. One of the articles of this was, "That the liberty of electing

* The writer glances here at that pre-eminence, which the Biſhops, ſo early as the middle of the ſecond Century, claimed over the Preſbyters. But this was a mere uſurpation; and the diſtinction on which it was pretended to be founded, viz. that between Biſhop and Preſbyter, was unſcriptural. See Letter V. And for the ſteps of this uſurpation, ſee Moſheim's Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, vol. I. on the 2d, 3d, and 4th centuries. Alſo, the Original Conſtitution of the Chriſtian Church, by T. A. miniſter of the goſpel at Alyth; and Jamieſon's Sum of the Epiſcopal Controverſy.

This uſurpation, by different ſteps, at laſt made way for the extravagant claims of the Biſhop of Rome.

perſons to eccleſiaſtical functions, obſerved in the Church, when not corrupted by Antichriſt, be reſtored; ſo as none to be intruded upon any congregation without lawful election and aſſent of the people." The next article is, "And becauſe this order cannot ſtand with Patronages, we deſire thoſe that fear God to conſider, that Patronages and Benefices have no ground in the word of God."—Of theſe articles I ſhall only obſerve, that they contain an aſſertion which is not proved; but, indeed, there can be little ground expected from the word of God in favour of benefices, when at that time there were no benefices to be preſented to. And let it be remarked, that theſe articles, as well as many others, were referred by the Parliament to a future diſcuſſion, which never afterwards took place, ſo that the demand of the clergy fell to the ground.

In the hiſtory of our Church, we meet with many bickerings between her and the civil government. The reaſon is obvious. The former is a republic, and the latter is a monarchy; two forms of government that cannot be both cheriſhed in the ſame nation, to their mutual advantage *. For this reaſon, I think our eccleſiaſtical conſtitution rather ill formed, unleſs the ſtate were under a ſimilar government. As matters are, we have an *imperium in imperio*. They cannot cordially join in promoting one common good. Self-intereſt will daſh that harmony that ought to ſubſiſt between them. The Church will ever be demanding; and the other, naturally jealous of a conſtitution hoſtile to its own, will endeavour to check and keep it under †. For this reaſon,

* Sure our civil government is not an abſolute monarchy; but partakes partly of the monarchical, and partly of the republican form.

† From what we have here, it appears, this gentleman is of opinion, that Epiſcopal government would be more proper in this country. But I fear the poor hilly country of Scotland would not be able to maintain a ſufficient number of Lord-Biſhops; and I believe the King and Parliament will rather chooſe to continue Jack Preſbyter's ſcheme, as cheapeſt, and moſt ſuited to ſuch a barren country. The zeal of ſome of the nobility againſt the Popiſh Biſhops, at the Reformation, was poſſibly whetted by a deſire of poſſeſſing the church-lands; and perhaps the hope of temporal

ſon, then, were there no other, the Legiſlature never will conſent to the repeal of the Patronage law, becauſe ſuch a meaſure would not only throw too much power into the hands of popular leaders among the Clergy, but open a door to numberleſs commotions in every pariſh in the kingdom, which might in the end unhinge our government, and, in the words of Scripture, be the means *of taking away both our place and nation.* But the people are not to be blamed for the noiſe that has been made about preſentations: They have been impoſed on by turbulent and deſigning men, who, for reaſons beſt known to themſelves, are never ſatisfied till they ſee their country diſtracted with debates about imaginary evils. By theſe men the people have been informed, that they have a right to chooſe their paſtors, though it is plain, to any perſon who ever read eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, that ſuch a practice never ſubſiſted in the Church of Chriſt. The people are, no doubt, diſſatisfied with many of their paſtors; but this may be traced to another cauſe than preſentations.

We have now a very different idea of preaching from what was conceived of it in the days of the Apoſtles. Then, it was intended to inſtruct people in their duty: Now, it is thought to be the duty itſelf. People were then told, that faith, worſhip, and morality, were the duty of man: They believe now, that hearing a ſermon is doing great matters; and yet they will not even do this without reluctance, unleſs the preacher's talents and manner are ſuited to their humours. Many of our pious people, again, are diſſatisfied with our public prayers: Theſe, you know, are at the diſcretion of the Miniſter, conſequently are as various as the different talents and principles among the Clergy can make them. Hence our public prayers are, too often, dry and inſipid; they are cold, tedious, and impertinent. This

temporal advantage gave an edge to the zeal of ſome of our Scotch nobility, and helped down with the Biſhops a ſecond time, in the reign of King Charles I. But ſhould a reformation be propoſed, by ſetting up Lord-Biſhops, and of conſequence reſtoring the church-lands, I doubt much that the zeal of the preſent Scotch nobility would be found cold.

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will ever be the caſe, where a different miniſter has a different form, and that often varied too, according to the whim of the moment. There are many of our Clergy, I know, whoſe prayers appear in a very different dreſs; yet I do not think that prayers ſhould be like eloquent orations. They are addreſſed to God. They who hear them may, for the moment, be a little enthuſiaſtic; yet enthuſiaſm is no devotion. We affect to call ourſelves an *enlightened* people, not miſled by ſounds, or by prejudices which ſhould have long ſince been forgotten. We call the foreign reformed our *brethren*; we approve of their practices. We ſhould be like them in one very material point, and which was indeed approved of by our own reformers, we ſhould have—A PUBLIC FORM OF PRAYER *. This would, at once, reſcue our public devotions from the hands of ignorant or ill-principled men. And if, by this means, we could pray like Chriſtians and wiſe men, and look for no more from ſermons than how to know our duty, we ſhould be a happy people, and our country would be reſcued from the reproach of the nations.—But while our people are void of charity, which is the bond of peace; while many of our Clergy pretend to preach the goſpel of Chriſt, whoſe doctrines and inſtitutions they diſown and gainſay ‖; and while our church admits among

* If, by a public form of prayer, this gentleman means, a pattern of, or directory for prayer, we have this already in the Weſtminſter Directory for Worſhip. But if by this he means, either a form to be read, or one to be repeated *verbatim*, I doubt much if it would remedy the evils he complains of. It is the opinion of ſome, that we are already too formal in praying and preaching both, to need any more of that; and that if our clergy had more of *the ſpirit of prayer*, they would both pray and preach better, and more to the ſatisfaction of people *really* pious.

‖ To the complaint, of the prevalence of hetorodoxy, or unſoundneſs in doctrine, here made by this gentleman, I would add ſome others alſo made by the people. They complain that ſeveral of their miniſters are not laborious in their proper work; particularly, in compoſing and getting by heart their public diſcourſes. They ſay, if a Lord or Commoner in Parliament, a Lawyer at the bar, or even an Actor on the ſtage, deliver their ſentiments (as they generally do) without reading, what a pity is it to ſee a learned clergyman dozing over his notes, and that he

mong her legiſlators men, who are none of her members, who have no religion, and who care not for any church, our ill fated kingdom will gradually decline; it will diſſolve; and at laſt be buried in oblivion with the mighty empires of old. I am, *&c.*

G. C.

LETTER V.

The People's right aſſerted from the New-Teſtament Scriptures, in a Letter which appeared in the Caledonian Mercury, Sept. 25. *and* 30. 1782.

SIR,

THOUGH I am naturally averſe to diſputing, yet as I believe perſons may reaſon without wrangling, and as I mean to attempt this at preſent, I beg a place for the following thoughts on Patronage and Popular Election, in your entertaining paper. Your correſpondent G. C. in his ſecond letter, maintains, with great confidence, that "the people have been impoſed on by turbulent "and deſigning men, by making them think they have "a right to chooſe their paſtors;" and adds," that it is

he will not take time and pains to mandate his diſcourſes; that, like the great Maſter, he may *cloſe the book* when he makes his orations! He would then deliver himſelf in a more natural way, and with more life and energy.—Again, they complain of too little pains taken in catechiſing; and of little or none, for the moſt part, in the inſpecting of the morals of their people, and admoniſhing them, which in old times was done by family-viſitation once a year. This laſt is a laborious work, but it is proportionably uſeful. But the people alſo complain of a too general relaxation of diſcipline; of promiſcuous admiſſion to the Lord's Table; and that even ſome of the clergy themſelves are not ſufficiently ſtarch in their own morals, nor religious enough in their converſation. In fine, they complain of (what is called) formality in public performances; and alſo of ſeveral miniſters not dealing more cloſely with the conſciences of their hearers in their ſermons. I only add, that theſe cauſes of complaint againſt the Preſbyterian clergy, have chiefly abounded ſince the re-introduction of Patronage; and that a reformation of the clergy, which would be the undoubted conſequent of popular election, would, by the bleſſing of God, be the means of a reformation of the people.

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" plain to any perſon, who ever read eccleſiaſtical hi-
" ſtory, that ſuch a practice never ſubſiſted in the
" Church of Chriſt." Now, unluckily, I am a perſon that has read a ſmall thing of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and yet the very reverſe appears to be fact to me; and I beg leave, as he deſires, to give " a reaſon" for my being of that opinion. You ſee I am not ſingular: Your ſenſible correſpondent A. B. is of the ſame mind. In giving my reaſons, I ſhall purſue the tract pointed out by him, and propoſe ſeveral additional conſiderations. I am of opinion, that popular election was the univerſal practice in the Apoſtolic church; and this I mean to prove and defend at preſent, as I can.

G. C. knows, that the New Teſtament Church was not founded till after Chriſt's reſurrection. It can be no objection, then, that the apoſtles and ſeventy diſciples were not choſen by a particular congregation or church. Their powers were immediately from Chriſt: They were not confined to a particular charge; and their office was extraordinary, and, in ſome reſpects, temporary. And, to this day, miſſionaries to Pagan nations, and alſo to places where there is no regular conſtituted church, are ordained and ſent out by the clergy, though not elected by them to whom they are ſent. And, by the way, this is ſufficient to vindicate the practice of our preachers at the Reformation, which G. C. alludes to.

But after the New Teſtament Church was founded, when an apoſtle was to be choſen in the room of Judas the traitor, the whole body of the diſciples were applied to on that occaſion, Acts i. who appointed, by common ſuffrage, two from their whole number to be candidates for that office; Providence wiſely ordering it that two ſhould be preſented, that one of theſe, being choſen by a lot, might appear to have his commiſſion, for this extraordinary office, immediately from heaven *.

Another

* The concern which the whole of the diſciples were to have in this election, is intimated, ver. 15, 16. by Peter's addreſſing himſelf to the whole of them on this occaſion. The aſſembly are repreſented as chooſing the candidates, ver. 23. THEY *appointed*, &c. as they are afterwards ſaid to join in prayer, ver. 24.

And

Another remarkable precedent, for popular election, we have in Acts vi. in the election of the deacons. G. C. is ſenſible of this; but he endeavours to take off the force of this argument, by ſuppoſing that what was done by the apoſtles and people, "amounts to no more "than what we may call, in the language of our Church, "moderating their call; that is to ſay, chooſing the "number of men preſented" (he ſhould have ſaid *deſired*, for they were not preſented) "by the apoſtles, "againſt whoſe character there could be nothing ob-"jected." And adds," that the difference between that "caſe and the preſent practice is this: The people in choo-"ſing the deacons, affirmed the perſons preſented to the "apoſtles to be men of honeſt report. The people now "deny the perſons preſented by the clergy or patrons "to be men of honeſt report, when there is ground for "this; and, therefore, the people now are as much "electors, as the people were in the caſe of the deacons." What he means is, that this was no more than a recommendation, or an atteſtation, of their character, and that the people now have full liberty to object to their moral character. As this is what logicians call a bare aſſertion, or mere affirmation, I might juſtly diſmiſs it without any reply. But as it is alſo a great miſtake, to elucidate the matter a little further, I appeal to the ſacred ſtory. "Wherefore, brethren, LOOK YE OUT "among you ſeven men of honeſt report, full of the "Holy Ghoſt and wiſdom." "AND THEY CHOSE "Stephen and Philip," &c. That the apoſtles ordained them, no body denies. The queſtion is not about ordination, but election. Now, I apprehend there is a

And THEY *prayed*, &c. where they certainly all joined in the prayer, though only one was their mouth to God. Is it not remarkable here, that while God could have called one to fill up the vacancy in the apoſtleſhip, by expreſs revelation, as he afterwards called Paul; yet, to be an example, no doubt, to after ages, he choſe to bring about his deſign by the intervention of the people's choice. This is the more to be noted, as the apoſtleſhip was an extraordinary office.—And as to the Apoſtles, if they and their ſucceſſors (as G. C. thinks) had the excluſive right of electing, they were ſurely too complaiſant, who ſo early gave the people a ſhare of that power; eſpecially, as by ſo doing they left a bad precedent to after ages.

wide

wide odds between the election of the deacons and the preſent practice. In the former caſe, the people are allowed, yea, and enjoined to judge, not only of their moral character, but alſo of their wiſdom, that is, their abilities for this office, and of their piety likewiſe, and to make a choice accordingly. But, have the people this power in our national Church? Again, in the former caſe, the people actually made the *choice:* But, are the people now allowed to chooſe whom they think fitteſt, and to prefer one out of ſome ſcores of clergymen, as theſe did ſeven out of ſome thouſands? With us the people have no vote, nay not ſo much as a negative, over Patron or Preſbytery; and they impoſe upon them whom they pleaſe, even when congregations are reclaiming. Farther, is it not clear, that a clergyman may be free from groſs immoralities, and yet void enough of piety? Have not ſome Deiſts, though, perhaps, few, been ſo? How much more may a man of learning, who profeſſes to believe the goſpel, be ſo? Or, may he not be deſtitute of pulpit talents? Or, again, though a man of ſenſe and learning, may he not have ſo weak a voice as not to be heard by above half the congregation? If ſo, he can be of little more uſe in the pulpit to the other half, than a ſtatue ſet up to look at. Moreover, the attacking of a clergyman's moral character, is, to people of feeling, a very delicate point: Few chuſe to bear the odious name of a *libeller* or *accuſer*. Beſides, it is too well known, that attempts of this ſort, unleſs when ſcandal is flagrant, are, in our times, to little purpoſe, except to gain ill-will to the accuſers. In fine, conſidering the influence of intereſt and connections, and the preſent power of patrons, I will be bold to ſay, that a liberty to object to any thing whatever does not imply a free election. The people may ſtill want the man they moſt wiſh for, and that would be fitteſt for them. Would this be reckoned a free election in chooſing a member of Parliament? And as ſuch a liberty does not imply a free election, neither does it come up to the apoſtolic ſtandard *.

To

* After all, it muſt be acknowledged, that the election of the deacons

To what has now been ſaid for illuſtrating the election of the deacons, Acts vi. 1.—6. I ſhall add the opinion of ſome eminent critics upon the place, who are in great vogue with many of the oppoſers of popular election, and who, by all, muſt be owned to have been men of great abilities. Grotius, *ad loc.* owns, that, in theſe days, the people had the power of electing preſbyters as well as deacons. Eraſmus, *ad. loc.* owns that the people had the power of election in general. Dr Hammond, an eminent Epiſcopal, acknowledges, that the people's power then was very great; that they not only elected the deacons, but joined in the choice and miſſion of the miniſters ſent to Antioch to quiet the commotions raiſed on the head of circumciſion: Acts xv. 22.—25. See his Comment. on Acts vi. 2. This confeſſion, extorted from ſo able an opponent, by the force of truth, is worth many.

The next memorable inſtance of elections, which we meet with in the ſacred hiſtory of the apoſtles, is of a number of elders in ſeveral churches, Acts xiv. 23. Theſe elders, or preſbyters, (for the word is the ſame) were, doubtleſs, ſome only for rule, and ſome for rule and preaching both, according to the diſtinction, 1 Tim. v. 17. They were alſo biſhops, for elder and biſhop was the ſame office in the apoſtolic age. This laſt is clear to every one who can read the Greek Teſtament, Acts xx. 17. comp. verſe 28. and to every Engliſh reader, Tit. i. 5. comp. verſe 7. Peter, though an apoſtle, thought it no degradation to be an elder, 1 Pet. v. 1. nor Timothy, who, in the uncanonical addition to the cloſe of his ſecond epiſtle, is called *firſt Biſhop of Epheſus*, to be ordained by a number of elders, 1 Tim. iv. 14. Luckily their hands had as good an effect on his head, as thoſe of Paul, who was the mouth of the

deacons does not directly prove the people's right to chooſe their paſtors: It only does ſo by neceſſary conſequence. Though the deacons were eccleſiaſtical officers, yet their work, and the qualifications neceſſary to it, differed from thoſe of the paſtor. Their buſineſs was to manage the monies which the people themſelves had contributed; and they were, in this reſpect, the people's truſtees. The argument drawn hence for the people's right to chooſe their own paſtors, is chiefly from this, that the Apoſtles ſhewed here, by their own example, that nothing of moment was to be carried on without the conſent of the people.

reſt, 1 Tim. iv. 14. comp. 2 Tim. i. 6. which, by the way, cuts the throat of G. C.'s favourite form of Church government, and ſhews, that the "republican" government of our national Church is more agreeable to the pattern ſhewn in the mount, than the Prelatic or Popiſh form that this well-known gentleman ſeems (though much out of character) to be ſo very fond of.

But, to return; how were theſe elders or biſhops choſen, according to Acts xiv 23? Let the word χειροτονησαντες, there uſed in the original, determine. Every ſchool-boy that can uſe a Greek lexicon, can ſee, at firſt glance, that it ſignifies, *to chuſe by ſuffrages*, or *votes*. The word was taken from the cuſtom of the Greeks at public elections, who, on theſe occaſions, gave their votes by ſtretching out or lifting up their hands. When this word is applied to God, there can be no vote, as in Acts x. 42. but, when applied to men, it implies a vote, or choice by vote, as in 2 Cor. viii. 19. Now, by whoſe vote or ſuffrage were theſe choſen? Did Paul and Barnabas diſpute this matter between them, as they did another, ſome time after? If ſo, it was lucky they agreed better than they did the next time. Or, is it not plain, from the ſignification of the word, that they conſulted the people in this matter? Not to weary the patience of the public, I ſhall produce ſome human authorities of conſiderable weight, for the above ſenſe and application of the word: And though tranſlations of the Bible are not to be equalled to the original, yet they are of weight here. I appeal, therefore, to the French Bible, where the words are, *Et apres que par l' avis des aſſemblées, ils eurent eſtabli des anciens par chaque egliſe:* In Engliſh thus, "And after that, by "the advice of the aſſembly, they had eſtabliſhed them "elders in every church." And to the Latin verſion, commonly uſed among Proteſtants, *Quumque ipſis per ſuffragia creaſſent per ſingulas eccleſias preſbyteros;* that is, "When they had by votes conſtituted for them el-"ders in every church †." Eraſmus, *ad loc.* explains the word

† To theſe I now add the old Engliſh tranſlation of the Bible, (called the Biſhops Bible) in uſe before the preſent tranſlation, where the words are, "And when they had ordained them elders "by

word, of chooſing by votes; Calvin, of chooſing by the people; while Paul and Barnabas acted as moderators to prevent confuſion. Dr Hammond, *ad loc.* acknowledges, that to chooſe by votes, is the primary ſenſe of the word, though he evades the argument taken from that ſenſe. Finally, I appeal to Grotius, *ad loc.* who will readily be ſuſtained by many of our opponents, as one of the beſt critics. He ſays, the word is meant of election; and again, "that is probable the preſent e-"lection was made with the conſent of the people, "from what we have in a matter of leſs conſequence," Acts vi. 2.—3.

I ſhall now conſider ſome objections that have been offered againſt the opinion here maintained. I am ſurpriſed to ſee your correſpondent G. C. wreſt Paul's reproof of theſe cauſeleſs ſchiſms in the Corinthian Church, mentioned 1. Cor. iii. 3, 4. to a condemning of popular election. This paſſage relates neither to the election nor ordination of miniſters, nay, nor even to the hearing of them. For neither Paul nor Cephas, *i. e.* Peter nor Chriſt, were at Corinth in perſon at this time, nor yet Apollos, 1. Cor. xvi. 12. But, as appears from this and the ſecond epiſtle, falſe teachers, probably from Judea, had ſet up at Corinth. To acquire credit, or, perhaps, money, theſe pretended to derive their doctrines and authority, ſome from Peter, and ſome from Chriſt; they denied Paul's authority, and drew a party after them. Same time, others, poſſibly natives of Corinth, from no better motives, oppoſed them, and maintained the dignity, ſome of Paul, and ſome of Apollos, from whom they pretended to derive their authority. Both parties are violent, and

"by election in every church."—In the margin we have the following note on the verſe: "The apoſtles committed the "churches which they had planted to proper and peculiar pa-"ſtors, which they made not raſhly, but with prayer and faſting "going before: neither did they thruſt them upon churches "through bribery or lordly authority, but choſe and placed them "by the voice of the congregation."

The old edition of this Bible bears date 1599. It was reprinted at London in 1775.

the debate ends in a ſchiſm. But what ſays this againſt popular election?

But granting, for argument's ſake, as G. C. inſinuates, that what Paul here meant to reprove was the caprice of the Corinthians, who, from humour or intereſt, "attached themſelves to one paſtor rather than "another;" will he ſay, that all that make a difference among miniſters are led by the ſame caprice? He muſt prove this, or he proves nothing. And, if he proves this, (if I miſtake not his ſignature) he is a ſchiſmatic himſelf, and ſo are all Proteſtants; and we ought all to have continued under the inſpection of the biſhop of Rome Who doubts but many are too much led by caprice in their attachment to ſome miniſters? Or, who will deny that popular election may be abuſed; yea, and that through faction or intereſt, a bad man may be preferred to a good, even though popular election were again eſtabliſhed? See 2 Tim. iv. 3 ‡. a text much more to G. C.'s purpoſe than 1. Cor. iii. But muſt we, in order to avoid the abuſe of an ordinance, aboliſh it? Then we may give up with all divine inſtitutions; for they are all, leſs or more, abuſed by ſome.

Again, G. C. harps much on it, that Paul's injunctions, about ordination of elders or biſhops, to Timothy and Titus, relate chiefly to what ſhould be their qualifications and character; and that he makes no mention of their election by the people. But to this it is replied, that there was the greateſt reaſon for his inſiſting mainly on qualifications, as theſe are the main thing that makes one a miniſter; and becauſe neither the call of the people, preſentation of a patron, nor ordination by biſhop or preſbytery, can make one a miniſter in God's ſight, that is either deſtitute of pulpit talents, or immoral in his practice ‖. A hypocrite may be

‡ 2 Tim. iv. 3. "For the time will come when they will "not endure ſound doctrine; but after their own luſts ſhall they "heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ears."

‖ Nor will the want of ſome formalities, either as to election or ordination, ſay, that he is no miniſter of Chriſt, who is poſſeſſed of the ſcriptural qualifications, and uſes them from an honeſt

be a ſent miniſter; but one deſtitute of gifts and ſobriety never can. As Paul then knew, that the ſucceſs of the goſpel depended chiefly on the character and qualifications of its preachers, under God, he acted wiſely in reminding Timothy and Titus of the neceſſity of a diligent enquiry into theſe. But is G. C. ſo weak as not to ſee, that theſe things were wrote to be communicated to the people for their direction, as well as to direct Timothy and Titus? Let him read 1 Tim. iv. 6. or rather all the three epiſtles referred to, and he will ſee, that the moſt of what was wrote was equally deſigned for both purpoſes. Does not Paul plainly intimate to Titus, Tit. i. 5. that he had already given him particular inſtructions as to the form of proceeding? Does not the word in the original convey this idea? In fine, what occaſion had they for a particular order to conſult the people, when they had doubtleſs ſeen ſo many elections before, and knew the form; and when they could not ſo much as know the characters of the candidates without conſulting them?

By this time, I preſume, we have ſeen, that popular election has the ſanction of apoſtolic example. I doubt much if the warrants for infant baptiſm and the change of the Sabbath, articles adopted by us all, can be better inſtructed from Scripture. The deductions to be made from what has been ſaid, I leave to the impartial Public.

Should any attempt to overthrow my reaſoning, it ſhall give me no pain: I pretend not to infallibility, but lie open to conviction. There is one argument, however, which I have not yet mentioned, that offers fair to ſettle this debate. It is taken from the right of

neſt principle. If we can read his commiſſion in his doctrine and practice, even though he ſhould be a member of an impure or ſuperſtitious church, or perhaps not perfectly free of blame for being ſo; we may yet ſafely pronounce him a miniſter of Chriſt, and ſent of God. They who enter in by Chriſt as the door, John x. 9. ought not to be reputed thieves and robbers, nor ranked with the falſe prophets, who, chiefly on account of their corrupt doctrine, were ſaid to run without being ſent, Jerem. xiv. 14. and xxiii. 21, 22,—32. Same time, it muſt be owned, that a free election is the beſt mean for trying and diſcovering their qualifications.

private judgment, as to the doctrines of the clergy, which belongs to the whole Chriſtian laity. The Bereans are commended for trying Paul's doctrine by the Scriptures, Acts xvii. 11. Chriſtians are commanded to try the ſpirits, and not to believe every ſpirit, becauſe many falſe prophets are gone out into the world, 1 John iv. 1. and to beware of falſe prophets, Matt. vii. 15. Now, from the right of Judgment undoubtedly follows the right of CHOICE, or of acting agreeably to that judgment; which is alſo clear from Scripture; for there it is ſuppoſed that ſome pretended clergymen may be ſo very groſs, that the Chriſtian laity are bound to refuſe them for their ſpiritual guides, 2 John x. Rom. xvi. 17. John x. 5*. When this laſt argument is fairly

* Some ſuppoſe, that the examples of popular election in the apoſtolic age, when the church had no countenance from, nor connection with, the civil ſtate, can be no rule or pattern under a civil eſtabliſhment. But I am apt to think otherwiſe, and to believe, that theſe examples ſhow the church to be a free ſociety; to be governed, as all free ſocieties are, with her own conſent; and that the full enjoyment of the immunities which Chriſt hath left her, is conſiſtent enough with the peace of ſociety, and no way detrimental to the civil ſtate, even under an eſtabliſhment. But be that as it may, the argument here produced from the divine command, applies equally to all ſtates of the church, both under and without an eſtabliſhment. And it ſhows, that the people's right to chooſe their own paſtors is unalienable; yea, and what they can never lawfully diveſt themſelves of. It does not indeed hence follow, that every individual muſt have a voice in the nomination of a miniſter to a particular charge. In ſuch a mixed body as an eſtabliſhment generally is, good order may not always allow this. It is ſufficient if they evidence their choice, either by acquieſcence, or by expreſs after conſent. Hence the General Aſſembly of this church in 1649, (when they had every thing at their own making, and when their zeal and ſtrictneſs were in their zenith,) gave the nomination to the ſeſſion, with a reſerve to the people at large to put in their objections againſt the perſon elected, if they had any; which objections were to be heard and judged upon by the Preſbytery, before the election was ſuſtained valid. But what I ſay is, that as every perſon is bound in conſcience to judge for himſelf, before he can lawfully receive one as *his* miniſter; it is therefore requiſite, in order to prevent confuſion, through people's diſſatisfaction, that the people either in perſon or by proxy, ſhould have

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fairly anſwered, I will give up the point †. That the real truth may be inveſtigated and eſtabliſhed, is the only wiſh of, Sir,

Your moſt humble
and moſt obedient ſervant,

Aberdeenſhire, Auguſt 23. 1782. } PHILANTHROPOS.

LETTER VI.

The People's right aſſerted from the Teſtimony of the Fathers, Decrees of Councils, Canons, and Hiſtory of the primitive Church; in a Letter which appeared in the Caledonian Mercury, October 16. 1782.

SIR,

AS candour and impartiality, which make a paper reſpected by the public, are peculiarly the characteriſtic of your paper in the general, you have evidenced a particular regard to theſe, in your inſerting in your *Mercury* of September 25th and 30th, my very long letter, of date Auguſt 23d, on patronage and popular election (the longeſt which has appeared in your paper for ſome years) in anſwer to G. C's ſecond letter, which appeared in the *Mercury* of Auguſt 12th. Thus indulged, I preſume to ſend you another letter on the ſame ſubject, which was wrote immediately after my

a vote, or even a conſiderable ſway, in the nomination. And the more free the election is, ſo much the better, and ſo much the nearer to the ſcripture rule.

† The many ſcripture quotations contained in this letter, may cauſe ſome people condemn the inſerting of it into a newspaper: And perhaps the cenſure is juſt. All that can be ſaid in excuſe is, that the texts quoted relate to a point of church-order; that the words are ſeldom mentioned; and that G. C. by denying that popular election had any precedent in the New Teſtament, was the firſt aggreſſor. In Philanthropos' firſt letter, the ſubject is only treated in a rational and political view.

former,

former, but waited till you ſhould find room for inſerting the firſt.

In my laſt, I attempted to ſhew, that popular election obtained univerſally in the Apoſtolic age. I am now to attempt a proof, that it obtained commonly, for a long time after. G. C. in his ſecond letter, aſſerts, with great confidence, "That it is plain to any perſon "who ever read eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, that ſuch a practice "never ſubſiſted in the Church of Chriſt." I ſhall oppoſe to his *ipſe dixit*, the authority of no leſs a man than Dr Lowth, who ſays, "that the people had *votes in the choice* "*of Biſhops*, all muſt grant. And it can be only IGNO-"RANCE and FOLLY that pleads the contrary." [Lowth on Church Power.] His teſtimony, while againſt his own Epiſcopal principles, is worth many. As G. C. ſeems fond of Prelacy, I ſhall give him the teſtimony of another Epiſcopal Divine. Dr Wall is forced to confeſs, "That it is a piece of hiſtory, which cannot fairly be "denied, that amongſt the primitive Chriſtians, the "people uſed to have their *ſuffrage* in the choice of "church officers; and that this is the moſt regular "way: That it continued many years; and thoſe "Chriſtians who have gone about to mend this way, "have made it worſe." [Dr Wall's Hiſt. Inf. Bap. Vol II. p. 334.]

I might juſtly reſt this matter on theſe unexceptionable teſtimonies, as G. C. has offered no proof from hiſtory, that the primitive Biſhops had the *excluſive* power of election; nor any argument from Scripture or antiquity for lay-patronage. But I ſhall, for the ſatisfaction of the Public, produce a number of authentic vouchers, which will incontrovertibly prove, that it was the opinion of the FATHERS of the primitive Church, *that the people had a right to chooſe their own paſtors*; or, at the leaſt, *that they ought to have a vote in the choice of them*; and alſo, *that for many hundreds of years after Chriſt, the people did actually uſe this right*, and make the choice. Several of the teſtimonies to be produced, and all theſe of them that are of moſt importance, I have taken from the original ſources, the FATHERS, as they are to be ſeen in one of our College libraries; and theſe I ſhall mark with an aſteriſk. The reſt of them I have copied

copied from eminent authors of ſufficient credit. Ignatius ſays, Πρεπον εστιν ὑμιν ὡς εκκλησια τυ Θυ χειροτονησαι επισκοπον. *i. e.* "It becomes you, as the "Church of God, to chooſe a Biſhop." [Ignat. in "Epiſt. ad Philad.] Clemens Romanus, a cotemporary of the Apoſtles, ſays, They appointed Biſhops συν ευδοκησει της εκκλησιας πασης. *i. e.* "With the ap-"probation (or conſent) of the whole Church." [Epiſt. ad Corinth. cap. 44.] But I eſpecially appeal to the teſtimony of Cyprian, biſhop of Carthage, who lived in the third century. He ſays of Cornelius, the ſucceſſor of Fabianus, Biſhop of Rome, * "De Dei judicio, "et cleri ac plebis ſuffragio, ordinatus." *i. e.* He was ordained in conſequence of the divine approbation, and the ſuffrage of both clergy and laity. [Cypr. Epiſt. 67.] Again, he ſays, * "Deus inſtruit ordinationes ſacerdo-"tales, non niſi ſub populi aſſiſtentis conſcientia, fieri "opportere." *i. e.* God appoints that the ordination of miniſters ſhould not take place, but with the knowledge and conſent of the people.—But, he is much more plain and poſitive upon the point a little before. He diſſuades the people from joining with the lapſed Biſhops, ſhews that they ought to chooſe others in the place of theſe, and gives this reaſon for it: * "Quando "ipſa (*i. e.* plebs) MAXIME habeat poteſtatem, vel "eligendi dignos ſacerdotes, vel indignos recuſandi. "Quod et ipſum videmus de divina auctoritate deſcen-"dere, ut ſacerdos plebe præſente, ſub omnium oculis "deligatur, et dignus atque idoneus, publico judicio ac "teſtimonio, comprobetur." *i. e.* "Since to the people *chiefly* belongs the power of chooſing worthy miniſters, or of rejecting the unworthy §," &c. He afterwards proves that this right belongs to the people, from Acts i. and Acts vi. and other paſſages of Scripture. We have

§ The following words are to be rendered in Engliſh thus:—"Which very thing we find ſupported by divine authority, (*literally*, We perceive to come down from divine authority,) that the people being preſent, the miniſter may be choſen before the eyes of all, and be approved worthy and fit by the public judgment and teſtimony, (or public opinion and voice.")

all

all the above, and much more to the ſome purpoſe, in his ſixty-eighth Epiſtle, which is directed to the Clergy and Common People in Spain; or, as in the title, "Ad "Clerum et Plebes in Hiſpania." I ſhall only quote one other teſtimony from him. It relates to the above-mentioned Cornelius, Biſhop of Rome, of whom he ſays in another epiſtle, * "Factus eſt Epiſcopus, de Dei et "Chriſti ejus judicio, de clericorum pene omnium teſti-"monio, de plebis quæ tunc affuit ſuffragio." *i. e.* He was made biſhop by the approbation (or ſentence) of God and of his Chriſt, by the teſtimony of almoſt all the clergy, and by the *ſuffrage* (or vote) of the people then preſent. [Epiſt. 52.]

The next authority that I ſhall produce is, that of Auguſtine, who lived in the end of the fourth, and beginning of the fifth century, after Chriſtianity had for a conſiderable time been the eſtabliſhed religion in the Roman Empire. * In his lifetime, he nominated his ſucceſſor, Eradius; and, having convened the people, they, in a very ſolemn manner, elected him, in Auguſtine's preſence. The whole formalities attending this tranſaction are mentioned in Auguſtine's CXth Epiſtle, which is well worth the peruſal of the curious.

The next authority is that of Leo I. Biſhop of Rome, called Leo the Great. In his eighty-ninth Epiſtle, wrote upon the occaſion of the uſurpations of Hilarius, by whoſe means ſome ordinations had been carried on in an irregular and tumultuous manner, and even by a military force, he ſays, * "Teneatur ſubſcriptio Cle-"ricorum, Honoratorum teſtimonium, ac Ordinis con-"ſenſus et plebis; qui præfuturus eſt omnibus, ab om-"nibus eligatur." *i. e.* Let the ſubſcription of the Clergy, the teſtimony of the Honourable, (*i. e* of the Nobility and Gentry,) and the conſent of the Aldermen and common people, be retained; let him who is to be over all, be choſen by all. I have rendered *Ordo*, Aldermen; though, perhaps, it may ſignify, *Citizens* or *Burgeſſes*; but I prefer the ſenſe given †. Leo flouriſhed in the 5th century.

I

† *Ordo*, as applied to perſons, often ſignifies *perſons of rank*; but

I ſhall next produce ſome authorities of a more public nature. * The Apoſtolic Conſtitutions decree, "that "he who is to be ordained a Biſhop, muſt be choſen as "the moſt worthy, by all the people." [Conſt Apoſt. lib. 8. cap. 2.] * The Canons of the Apoſtles (as they are called) depoſe ſuch Biſhops as are choſen [or introduced] by the civil magiſtrate, [Canon. Apoſt. 29. & 31. in Photio.] In them we have more to the ſame purpoſe. [Vid. Canon. 37. vel ſecundum aliam edit. 35.] * The famous Council of Nice, in the year 325, in a Synodical Epiſtle to the Church of Alexandria, Lybia, *&c.* ordains as follows: "Si quis forte "eccleſiæ præſul obdormierit, jus eſto paulo ante re-"ceptis, ſuccedere in locum demortui, ſi modo et "mereri videbuntur & populus elegerit." *i. e.* In caſe of the death of a prelate, it ſhall be allowable to one of thoſe who have been formerly admitted into orders, to ſucceed in the room of the deceaſed; but only if he appear worthy, and be choſen by the people. [Apud Theodoretum, lib. 1. cap. 9.]

I have before me canons of the Councils of Carthage, of the Council of Conſtantinople, 381 and 382, of the Council of Paris 552, or, as ſome ſay, 559, to the ſame purpoſe. I have alſo before me excerpts from the writings of Ambroſe, Chryſoſtome, Gregory Nazianzen, Theodoret, Socrates, Sulpitius Severus, Euſebius, Evagrius, Sozomen, and Athanaſius, (ſome of which I have traced in the original ſources,) all full to the point. They all agree, that it was the judgment and practice of the Church in their days, *that the people ſhould have a vote in the choice of their paſtors.* But it would be too tedious to inſert all theſe in a News-papér. It is indeed evident, that the clergy had a great influence on theſe elections, and that ſome of them were attended with riot and confuſion: But in all, the people's right is, leſs or more, apparent. This practice continued pretty

but it cannot do ſo here, as theſe ſignified by it are diſtinguiſhed from the *honorati*, who are allowed to give what is called *teſtimonium*, while the others are reſtricted to the giving of their *conſent*.

generally

generally for eight centuries; nor was it wholly abolished so far down as the 13th. I leave it now to the impartial public to give sentence in this controversy. After giving you so much trouble, I beg leave to subscribe myself,

SIR,

Your most humble, and
Most obedient servant,
PHILANTHROPOS.

Aberdeen-shire,
October 3. 1782.

N. B. All the testimonies marked with an asterisk at the beginning of them, were, by the writer of this letter, extracted with the utmost fidelity, from the Fathers in the library of the Mareschall College, Aberdeen. They may therefore be depended on, as being drawn from the original sources. He has given translations of them; these he leaves to the judgment of the public ‡.

LETTER VII.

To the Printer of the Caledonian Mercury,

SIR,

TO see a Presbyterian appeal to the Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians, is one of the marvels of this marvellous age. Your correspondent *Philanthropos* might have discovered things in that Epistle not much to his liking; but neither he nor any one else can discover the phrase that he quotes, "It becomes you, as the Church of God, *to choose a Bishop:*" For what Ignatius says is, "It is fit that you, as a Church, in a collective "capacity, should employ a *deacon* to carry a certain "message to another Church ‖;" and he tells what the message

‡ It has been the aim of the translator to express what he takes to be the genuine sense of the words, in tolerable English; this he judged more proper, than to confound his readers with a literal and barbarous translation.

‖ For an answer to this, see Letter IX. Since writing that letter, Philanthropos is very sorry to find, by a copy of Ignatius, in

ſhould be. Is not this a wonderful authority in ſupport of the power of the people in chooſing miniſters under an eſtabliſhment?

Philanthropos gravely appeals to the *Apoſtolical Conſtitutions*, and the *Canons of the Apoſtles*. Is he ſuch a novice in eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, as not to know what judgment ought to be formed of thoſe treatiſes? His tranſlations are no leſs ſingular than his authorities: For example, "Sub populi aſſiſtentis conſcientia," is rendered "with the knowledge of the people conſenting."

OBOLUS.

in the library at Gordon Caſtle, that Obolus was impoſing upon the public. Whether that gentleman took the advantage of Philanthropos' declaring that he copied this teſtimony at the ſecond hand, or poſſibly be unacquainted with the Greek; or, in fine, (which is a more charitable, and therefore a more reaſonable ſuppoſition) whether there be a variation in the copies, Philanthropos cannot ſay; but in the above copy, in the epiſtle quoted, the paſſage runs word for word as ſaid by Philanthropos. It is at length this: "Seeing I am told, that, through your "prayers, the church of Antioch in Syria is in peace, πρεπον ἐστιν ὑμιν ὡς ἐκκλησια Θεου χειροτονησαι ἐπισκοπον, εἰς τὸ πρεσβευσαι ἐκει Θεῳ πρεσβειαν,—"*It becomes you as the church of* "*God to chooſe* A BISHOP, *to carry thither God's meſſage*, that he "may rejoice with them when they meet together, and glorify "God's name."

As Philanthropos glories in allowing every thing to an opponent that he can claim with any ſhew of reaſon, he frankly acknowledges that this paſſage does not immediately relate to the calling of a miniſter: but it nevertheleſs ſhews the power *the people* then had in all public matters.

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

To the Printer of the Caledonian Mercury.

תח קפ תר קנשנשש ין קשש
אש פידלרש דז תר קרודש אנד בשש
נר טר בי רשד בוט וחן תר בנט
טר חלח א פיט פר ארנרמנט.

SIR,

THERE has been a great deal of noiſe of late in this country about the right of the people to elect their own miniſters; and many advertiſements and letters have appeared in your paper on that ſubject.

My attention was drawn, in a particular manner, to the laſt of theſe letters, clothed in the learned garb of the Univerſity of Aberdeen, uſhering in, with much oſtentatious ſolemnity, a cloud of quotations and authorities, both from the New Teſtament and from the ancient Fathers, in ſupport of this much cried up right of the people.

I give the gentleman all credit for his learning, as well as for the aptneſs of his quotations; but it is rather ſtrange that a man of ſome reading, as he ſeems to be, ſhould apply ſuch paſſages to the ſervice of the cauſe which he means to ſupport.

That, in the ancient churches of Chriſt, inſtituted by his Apoſtles, the election of their miniſters or paſtors was by the unanimous voice of the whole Church, that is, of every ſingle member of the congregation to which ſuch paſtor belonged, is as clear (without any authority of the Fathers) as the cleareſt precept and the cleareſt example in the New Teſtament can make it. But this, Sir, was *in the days of the Apoſtles;* and your correſpondent does not ſurely mean to ſay, that the ſtate of matters then is the ſame with what it is or ought to be now. If he does, I ſuſpect his arguments will prove more than he wiſhes them to do.

In the days of the Apoſtles, the right of the people

to

to elect their own paſtors was founded in the very nature of their doctrine and connection. In thoſe days, the religion of Jeſus was not connected with any ſtate or nation in a national capacity; and the paſtors of the churches, inſtituted by his Apoſtles, had of courſe no dependence upon ſuch ſtate, nor upon the landed gentlemen, the heritors, or heads of families, in the various diſtricts belonging to it. The right of Patronage was then *perfectly unknown;* and equally unknown was it for a paſtor, as ſuch, to be ſupported *otherwiſe than by the people whom he taught.* From *them*, indeed, the paſtors in thoſe days freely received (when there was occaſion) what was as freely contributed by a willing people, maintaining and knowing, that "they who ſerved the altar were entitled to live by the altar." But ſuch was the ſpirit of the paſtors in thoſe days, that they did not incline to uſe this privilege: They rather chooſed (however ſtrange it may now ſeem) to ſerve without ſtipends! and *to work with their own hands*, that they might not be chargeable to their people *.

This, Sir, was moſt undoubtedly the caſe in the firſt age of the Church; and your correſpondent, by his learning, may ſee this as clearly as he has ſeen, that the people had then a right to elect their own paſtors. But, do I mean to ſay, that though this was the caſe in the churches planted by the Apoſtles, and muſt ſtill be the caſe in ſuch churches as are formed after their example, that therefore it ought alſo to be the practice in ſuch churches as your correſpondent writes of? By no means.—I know, that the rulers of theſe churches "have altered all theſe things." And what I charge your correſpondent with is, *a want of conſiſtency*, in pretending to quote the example of the firſt churches as binding upon the conſciences of men in *one thing*, without admitting them to be equally binding *in every thing*. The

* For an anſwer to this, ſee note on Letter V. p. 30.—If the apoſtles had not fixed ſtipends, they had what was equivalent to them, as this Gentleman acknowledges: and, as every body knows, they very ſeldom wrought for a ſubſiſtance, but generally lived upon the contributions of their people. The objections againſt Popular Election from the payment of ſtipend, will be anſwered Letter XIII.

Church

Church of Scotland is connected with the State;—it is *dependent* upon it, and *cannot ſubſiſt without it*. The Miniſters of the Church of Scotland are, of courſe, dependent upon the ſame State, and draw their living from it: But whether the perſons who pay them this living, or they who pay them not, ſhall have the right of placing *theſe* Miniſters, is a matter which they who derive their religion ſolely from the New Teſtament have no concern with. Yea, nothing can ſhew greater ignorance of the New Teſtament, than to ſuppoſe, that the furious, clamorous zeal, now raging in the people of the different pariſhes of Scotland, through the influence of their leaders courting popularity, has any connection with the ſacred and indefeaſible rights of the people of Chriſt; rights which the Lord himſelf gives, and which it is not the power of man to take from them. I am,

SIR,

Your moſt humble ſervant,

PHILALETHES.

P. S. I hope your readers will excuſe my motto, which the learned Gentleman on the other ſide will find *has a meaning*.

LETTER IX.

To the Printer of the Caledonian Mercury.

SIR,

PHILANTHROPOS contends *pro veritate, non pro victoria*; "for truth, not for victory." In reply to the letter ſigned *Obolus*, he only ſays, that his remote ſituation in the country does not allow him at preſent to ſearch Ignatius for the teſtimony quoted. He may have an opportunity ſome time after. Till then, he ſhall give up Ignatius, and Clemens Romanus too, (though not yet queſtioned.) As he formerly ſaid, he can vouch for all the other teſtimonies from the Fathers,

thers, quoted by him, having read and conſidered them and their connections in the original ſources, and faithfully copied them therefrom. In place of theſe two, which (as ſaid in his letter) he copied at ſecond hand, (ſee the *Mercury* of 16th current) he now ſubſtitutes four, ſome time ago copied by him from the original authors. Socrates [lib. 4. hiſt. cap. 30.] ſays of Ambroſe Biſhop of Milan, "that he was elected by the "common ſuffrage of all." Another inſtance of popular election is to be ſeen in Euſebius, [De Vita Conſtant. lib. 3. cap. 60, 61.] when Euſtathius was choſen at Antioch. Another at Alexandria, in Evagrius, [lib. 2. cap. 5.] Laſtly, he appeals to the conceſſions of Bellarmine, not *a Father*, but a learned enemy to popular election. [Vid. Oper. Bellarm. in artic. *de Clericis*.] There is as much acknowledged there as is ſufficient to ſilence all the objections of Proteſtants. The whole article is well worth any gentleman's peruſal.

Philanthropos further begs leave to obſerve, that the quotations from the Fathers, on which he declared, in his letter, that he laid the ſtreſs of his argument, are yet untouched. [See the letter *ubi ſupra*.] And he purſuades himſelf, that the teſtimonies from Cyprian, Auguſtine, Leo I. and from the decree of the Council of Nice, will never loſe their weight while the authors are in print.

Mr *Obolus'* criticiſm upon the tranſlations does not in the leaſt affect the argument. He challenges one; he ought, therefore, to have given *a better*: But, as he has not done this, *Philanthropos* now gives the ſenſe in Cyprian's own words: To be ordained "*ſub populi* "*aſſiſtentis conſcientia*," may be explained by "Ut ſa- "cerdos, *plebe præſente, ſub omnium oculis*, deligatur, "*et dignus atque idoneus, publico judicio ac teſtimonio*, "*comprobetur*." *Philanthropos*, in his letter, inſinuated, that the Conſtitutions and Canons were not the work of the Apoſtles; and that they were only called ſo: But they ſhew, that it was the opinion of the authors of them, that popular election was founded in the apoſtolic doctrine and practice. As a teſtimony of the opinion of the ancient Church, they cannot juſtly be

refuſed; he has, therefore, no reaſon to give them up.

Philanthropos has only to add, that he is much obliged to Mr *Obolus* for his remarks; but cannot think the inſinuation, conveyed by that gentleman's ſignature, is very charitable; and it makes nothing to the point in debate *.

Philanthropos congratulates *Philalethes* upon their agreement as to the main point, *the rights of the people*. As to the objection, of applying the common principles of both to *an eſtabliſhment*, he will only ſay, that he owns that the political connection of a Church with the civil ſtate, is too often a ſpecial cauſe of her degeneracy; but then an eſtabliſhment can never make any corruption to be no corruption: That the nearer an eſtabliſhed religion comes to the apoſtolic ſtandard, the better: That he believes the Legiſlature have it in their power to remove the antichriſtian grievance of Patronage; and that this would be a general benefit to the nation. As to the propriety of religious eſtabliſhments in general, which *Philalethes'* reaſoning ſtrikes againſt, he leaves every one to judge for himſelf: They have their advantages and diſadvantages. *Philalethes* will eaſily underſtand him, when he refers him to Iſai. xlix. 23. and Ezra vii. 23 †. *Philalethes* ſeems to mean, that, ſo long as the people are not compelled to conform to an eſtabliſhment by perſecution and outward force, but allowed by the Legiſlature to follow their own private judgment, they have no reaſon to complain. But will he not agree with *Philanthropos*, that it would be the duty and honour of our rulers to act up to the texts above mentioned? And it is hard to condemn the people (while they keep within the bounds of decency) for wiſhing them to do ſo. And as to the goodneſs of the people's motives, *Philanthropos'* charity "hopeth all things, and believeth all things."

Philanthropos is aſhamed of the compliments paid him by *Philalethes*; but if *Philalethes'* Hebrew motto agree to *Philanthropos*, he muſt be *a very bad man indeed*; and theſe undeſerved compliments can be of lit-

* *Obolus* ſignifies a halfpenny.

† Theſe texts are ſuppoſed to prove, that religious eſtabliſhments are countenanced by Scripture.

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tle value to him. If, however, *Philanthropos* be not blinded by ſelf-flattery, he thinks he is at leaſt poſſeſſed of ſome ſmall ſhare of candour; and he hopes he has given ſome evidence of this on the preſent argument.

By inſerting this, firſt convenient occaſion, you will oblige,

Sir, your conſtant reader,

Aberdeenſhire, Oct. 25. 1782. PHILANTHROPOS.

P. S. If the anſwer given do not ſatisfy *Philalethes*, he may poſſibly have ſomething farther afterwards.

Philanthropos has uſed the freedom to decypher *Philalethes'* charitable motto. It is in plain Engliſh:---

"They keep their conſciences in caſes,
"As fiddlers do their crowds *and baſſes;
"Ne'er to be us'd but when they 're bent
"To play a fit for argument."

* Fiddles.——It is a quotation from Hudibras, Part 2. Canto 2. line 5,—8.

[*The following Letters were never before publiſhed.*]

LETTER X.

More Arguments for the People's right, from Antiquity.

To the Societies at Edinburgh and Glaſgow, conſtituted for obtaining the repeal of the preſent Patronage-Law.

GENTLEMEN,

PERMIT a real friend of your's to addreſs you on a ſubject which, he believes, to lie very near your hearts. *The people's right to chooſe their own paſtors* is, in our day, ridiculed as a new and upſtart notion. To evince the contrary of this was the deſign of ſeveral of the preceding letters.—In other caſes, only the weight of arguments is attended to; but, in proving a thing to have

have been a common practice, the number, as well as the weight of the teſtimonies, comes into the account: This is the only reaſon why, after all the teſtimonies adduced on that head, a few more are preſented to you, in this Letter: And theſe relate to the ſtate of the Church in the third, fourth, fifth, and ſixth centuries. Not to detain you with a long preface,

Cyprian often ſays, *Nihil fiat niſi conſentiente plebe*, i. e. "Let nothing be done but with the conſent of the "people." Himſelf he declares to have been choſen to his office, *favore plebis —populi ſuffragio*; i. e. "by the "favour of the people," and "by the ſuffrage [or "vote] of the people."

Again, in his ſixty-eight epiſtle, [*Ad Clerum et Plebes in Hiſpania*,] quoted in a former letter, he ſays, "Hoc in Collegæ noſtri Sabiniani ordinatione factum "eſt; ut de univerſi fraternitatis ſuffragio, et de epiſco-"porum qui in præſentia convenerant, quique de eo ad "vos literas fecerant, judicio, Epiſcopatus ei deferretur." *i. e.* "This was done in the ordination of our Colleague "Sabinian; that the Epiſcopal dignity might be con-"ferred upon him by the ſuffrage of all the brethren, "and by the judgment of the Biſhops, both who "were there aſſembled, and who had wrote to you in "his favours:" [Or, "and by the judgment of the bi-"ſhops, both of thoſe who were preſent, and of thoſe had wrote," *&c.*] Further,

Ambroſe [*lib.* 10. *epiſt.* 82.] ſays of one elected by the people, "Merito vir tantus evaſit, quem omnis ele-"git Eccleſia; merito creditur, quod divino eſſet electus "judicio, quem omnes poſtulaviſſent:" *i. e.* "No won-"der he proved ſo great a man, who was choſen by the "whole Church; with good reaſon is he believed to "have been choſen with the divine approbation, [or "choſen of God,] who was deſired by all;" [or, whom all ſought for.] This brings to mind the *poſtulatio* ſo famous among the ancients; by which was meant, The people's expreſſing their deſire for ſome particular perſon, named by them, to fill a vacancy in the Church. To this nomination and deſire great reſpect was generally paid in ſettling a miniſter. This uſage was ſo very common, long after Chriſtianity was the eſtabliſhed religion of

of the empire, that the phraſe *poſtulatio*, by which it was expreſſed, became familiar, like any common term of art, as *a preſentation*, or *a call*, to a miniſter, are among us. This is to be ſeen every where in the Fathers, when treating on that ſubject; and it tends to caſt no ſmall light on the hiſtory and uſages of the Church in that age, ſo far as relates to the mode of placing miniſters. But, to proceed:

Chryſoſtom [*lib.* 3. *de ſacerdo.*] ſays what is very remarkable, *viz.* "Omnes electiones et vocationes irritas "fieri, quæ fiant ſine populi conſcientia et aſſenſu:" *i. e.* "That all elections and calls ARE VOID, that are gone "about without the knowledge and conſent of the peo-"ple." That is, that they are not *valid*, and are no better than *no call*. Chryſoſtom himſelf was choſen Biſhop of Conſtantinople by the common conſent of all perſons, clergy and common people. [*Socrat. Schol. lib.* 6. *cap.* 2.]

Sulpitius Severus [*cap.* 7.] ſays, That in the choice of St Martin, the votes of the People carried it againſt the votes of the Biſhops themſelves, the People inſiſting upon their privilege.

Gregory Nazianzen mentions it to the commendation of Athanaſius, that he was choſen ψηφῷ τῶ λαῶ παν]ος; *i. e.* "By the ſuffrage of all the people."

Others ſay the ſame of Peter, the ſucceſſor of Athanaſius. [*Theodore, lib.* 4. *Hiſt. cap.* 10. *et Niceph. lib.* 11. *Hiſt. Eccleſ. cap.* 20.]

Athanaſius [*in epiſt. ad Orthodox.*] condemns a Biſhop's coming in without the people's conſent, as a breach not only of an eccleſiaſtic conſtitution, but of an apoſtolic precept. So again, [*in epiſt. ad ſolitariam vitam agentes*] he ſays, "Ubi ille canon, ut a Palatio mitta-"tur is qui futurus eſt Epiſcopus?" *i. e.* "Where is the "canon appointing, that he who is to be a Biſhop ſhall "be ſent from [or commiſſioned by] the Court?"

Alexander was made Biſhop of Jeruſalem by the compulſion or choice of the members of that Church. Upon the death of Anterus Biſhop of Rome, all the people met together in the church to chooſe a ſucceſſor;—and they all took Fabianus, and placed him in the Epiſcopal Chair. [Conſtitut. and Diſcipline of the primitive Church

Church, page 46.] Of Cornelius, the ſucceſſor of Fabianus, we have ſpoken in a former letter.

What we have to obſerve upon many of theſe examples is, That they muſt be very unaquainted with the ſtate of the Church, at that time, that do not ſee, that when popular election obtained in the Churches of Rome, Conſtantinople, Jeruſalem, &c. it behoved, from the *then* influence of *their* example, to obtain generally in the reſt.

Let us now appeal to the decrees of Councils. Beſides thoſe formerly mentioned, the following are worthy of notice: The Council of Carthage ordained as follows; "Ne Epiſcopus ſine aſſenſu et teſtimonio po-"puli clericos ordinet:" *i. e.* "Let not a Biſhop or-"dain the clergy without the conſent and teſtimony of "the people." [Conc. 3. canon. 27. et Conc. 4. canon. 12.] One of theſe Councils of Carthage, near the end of the fourth century, when Chriſtianity had now for near a century been eſtabliſhed in the empire, appointed, That a Biſhop was to be ordained *only*, "cum "omni conſenſu clericorum et laicorum," *i. e.* "With "the univerſal conſent both of the clergy and laity." [Concil. Carthagin. anno 394.]

Again, the Council of Conſtantinople, much about the ſame time, [annis 381 et 382.] ſay, They ordained Nectarius, "Cuncta decernente civitate," *i. e.* "All "the city giving their ſuffrage for it."

In fine, the Council of Paris, in the year 552, or (as others will have it,) the year 559, (when Chriſtianity had been eſtabliſhed in the empire, and had continued ſo, amidſt all the *then* commotions, for near two centuries and a half, a period nearly equal to that which has elapſed ſince the Reformation,) this Council made the following remarkable decree: "That becauſe the ancient "cuſtom, and the decrees of the canons, were neglect-"ed in ſome cities, they appoint thoſe decrees to be "kept, *Ut nullus civibus invitis ordinetur Epiſcopus, niſi* "*quem populi et clericorum electio pleniſſima quæſierit* "*voluntate.*—*i. e.* That none be ordained a Biſhop a-"gainſt the will of the citizens; and none but he whom "the people and clergy ſhall chooſe with full conſent." How remarkable ſuch a decree at ſuch a date! The *quæſierit* here, is the ſame with the *poſtulatio* ſpoken of before,

fore, and very naturally brings it to one's mind. But, as if it were not enough to make ſuch a decree, it is even ſaid they required compliance with it, on pain of excommunication. For the whole of this, vid. Marcus Antonius *De Dominis de Reipubl. Eccleſ. lib.* 1. *cap.* 22. *num.* 10.; *et lib.* 3. *cap.* 3. *num.* 12.

But, Gentlemen, that I may not quite exhauſt your patience, I only add, That the mighty conteſts and ſtruggles into which the great cities frequently fell at the election of their Biſhops, and of which eccleſiaſtical hiſtory is full, do put beyond all doubt the antiquity of the practice of popular election: — Such as that at Antioch, deſcribed by Euſebius [*De Vita Conſtant. lib.* 3. *cap.* 60, 61. *ſupra notat.*]; that at Cæſarea, deſcribed by Gregory Nazianzen [*Orat.* 19.]; that at Alexandria, by Evagrius [*lib.* 2. *cap.* 5. *ſupra notat.*]; and many others; as that at Conſtantinople ſeveral times by Sozomen; that at Epheſus, by Chryſoſtom; at Verſeilles, by Ambroſe; at Milan, by Socrates; [*lib.* 4. *cap.* 30. *ſupra notat.*]; and at Rome, by Ammianus Marcellinus *.

The Second Council of Nice, which met in the year 787, made indeed a decree reſtraining the people's liberty; but (as appears from Letter III. of this Collec-

* As to the tranſlations in this Letter, the ſame is to be ſaid as in note at the cloſe of Letter VI. The tranſlator can honeſtly ſay, that, to the beſt of his knowledge, he has given the genuine ſenſe; and that he has not deſignedly perverted a ſingle word to favour his own argument.

As to the genuineneſs of the quotations here, he acknowledges that he only traced a part of them in the original authors. There may, therefore, poſſibly be ſome miſtakes in the figures directing where to find ſome of them, through errors of the preſs in the authors whence they were copied. But as this does not affect the words, nor the ſenſe, ſo neither will it be a real hindrance to finding them, if any Gentleman ſhould incline to ſee them in the original ſources.—They can always be traced by comparing the ſubject of them with the titles of books and chapters: And it is to be hoped, that ſuch errors will be found very few, and poſſibly none at all.

Should any Gentleman wiſh to ſee more on this ſubject, he may conſult Antonius *De Dominis de Re publ. Eccleſiaſt. lib.* 3.: and *Gratian. Decret. Diſt.* 23 *et* 24. *et* 62, 63, *& ſequ.*: and the writers on the controverſy with the Papiſts and Epiſcopals about the election of miniſters.

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tion,) it was long after that before it was totally ſuppreſſed. Some other decrees of Councils, as of that at Laodicea, in the year 364, ſeem only deſigned to prevent tumult and confuſion at public elections: This Council refuſes the power of election, ὀχλοις, "to "crowds," or "to a tumultuous rabble;" but not λαῷ "to the People." But, without inſiſting further,

Upon the whole, Gentlemen, it is clear as noon, that the Church of Chriſt long enjoyed that liberty wherewith Chriſt had made her free; and thus had the power of chooſing the moſt worthy men for her miniſters. And this tended to keep up ſomething of the power of religion in ſeveral places; until, by degrees, an univerſal degeneracy ſeizing all ranks, the people loſt ſight of the true qualifications of a goſpel miniſter, and there were few worthy ones to chooſe.

After detaining you ſo long, it is time to ſubſcribe myſelf,

GENTLEMEN,

Your moſt humble,

And moſt obedient ſervant,

PHILANTHROPOS.

LETTER XI.

To the Societies at Edinburgh and Glaſgow, conſtituted for obtaining the repeal of the preſent Patronage-Law.

GENTLEMEN,

I PRESUME to give you this further trouble on the the head of Patronage and popular election. Having, in my former letters, argued the point from ſcripture and antiquity, I now appeal to reaſon. If, then, we attend either to the nature of things, or to undoubted facts, lay-patronage will appear an improper inſtitution, and popular election, on a more or leſs extenſive ſcale, the only proper one. And, firſt, I argue from the nature of things.

POWER, in general, in the hands of a ſingle perſon, is liable, through the corruption of men, to be perverted

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to tyranny and oppreſſion; or, at the leaſt, to be uſed for the purpoſes of intereſt, more than for the good of the community. To remedy this evil, and prevent the abuſe of power, it has, in all free ſtates, been either parcelled out amongſt a number, or limited *. And, on this plan, the original government of the Chriſtian Church, that product of divine wiſdom, and pattern of after ages, was founded.

Again, power of ſome kinds is, not ſeldom, a ſnare to them that are poſſeſſed of it. They are importuned by their friends and dependents for places or favours for themſelves or their friends. Should objects more worthy § alſo preſent themſelves, they are loth to grant them to the other; yet, through falſe delicacy, they are equally loth to refuſe any thing to their friends, and they cannot ſerve both. Will it not occur to any perſon, that the conſequence in this caſe muſt too generally be, that through human weakneſs, a regard to merit will give way, and the conſiderations of intereſt and friendſhip preponderate? But let a perſon be only poſſeſſed of a ſhare of the ſame power; why, he can eaſily reſiſt the importunities of his friends in behalf of a leſs worthy object, by telling them, That he has only one vote, and that many others muſt be conſulted, as well as he, before ſuch a thing can be obtained. How applicable theſe remarks to the power of patrons! A power liable to be perverted, not only from an undue regard to intereſt, but even from the more tender and humane impulſe of friendſhip.

Let me only add, that this power (except where bribery intervenes) is attended with no other perſonal advantage, but the ſerving of a few dependents, which muſt ſometimes be done at the expence of diſobliging ſeveral of them, to pleaſe one: Is it not, therefore, often a trouble to its poſſeſſors? And may it not be hoped,

* This point was of late beautifully illuſtrated in the celebrated letters of *Zeno*, on the repreſentation of the Scotch Boroughs in Parliament. But the preſent letter was in no part ſtolen from him, but was finiſhed and corrected for the preſs in October laſt. See Dedication.

§ This explains what is meant by *merit* in this letter. It is not meant of merit in the ſight of God, for no ſuch thing exiſts with man, but of qualifications for an office.

that Noblemen and Gentlemen of real delicacy, will, on this account, be the more eaſily prevailed with to give it up for the good of the community †?

It muſt be, indeed, granted on the other hand, that though the power of election were committed to a number of perſons, the ſame ſolicitations would probably be uſed, and (however improper it might be) the friends of candidates would, in all likelihood, either openly or covertly exert the moſt vigorous endeavours to gain a majority of electors. But the election would have many chances to go according to *merit* in this caſe, for one that it would have on the other. If the electors were many, or the repreſentatives of many, it would be very difficult to corrupt them. Simony ‖ would not dare to ſet up its head. Many of the electors being unconnected with the candidates or their friends, that falſe delicacy which will not allow us to deny our friends any thing, would not influence *them*. Such as ſhould ſtand up for *merit*, and thus act from conſcience, would find a number ready to join with them and back them: if they ſhould be oppoſed, theſe would keep them in countenance, and in all ſuch caſes, this is a great point. In fine, this plan of election, and this alone, would give full ſcope to all the INTEGRITY and VIRTUE of the community to exert itſelf.

The conſequence of all which is, that wherever this plan of election obtains, churches muſt flouriſh, and will be furniſhed with men of ability and integrity for their paſtors. Nor is it poſſible that ſuch churches can utterly fall, while there are any in them to ſtand up for truth and holineſs: the only thing that can effect their ruin, is a total degeneracy of all ranks in them. But Patronage, inſtead of this, opens a door for the introduction of corrupt, venal, and inſignificant Clergymen; nor can any church long flouriſh, where it is in full power.

† This whole ſentence expreſſes the declared ſentiments of one of the firſt Noblemen of our nation (and the very firſt in his own country,) on the head. Would to God all his inferiors were like-minded!

‖ Simony is the procuring of an eccleſiaſtical office, or benefice, by money, *&c.*

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In decrying Patronage, I ſhall not inſiſt on the arguments uſually taken from the little regard paid to religion by many *great men*, nor on thoſe from the Scriptures, affirming, that, *not many mighty or noble are called*, that *rich men* with difficulty *enter into the kingdom of God*, and that *God hath choſen the poor of this world*; though it be evident from theſe, that rich men are not the fitteſt perſons in all the world to have the *excluſive* power of chooſing ſpiritual guides for the Church. But theſe topics are invidious, and I decline them; and the populace are too ready to find fault with their ſuperiors, without any ſuch incitement. Nor can it be denied, that there have been patrons, who, though rich in this world, have yet feared God, and done much to promote religion; and have literally been THE PATRONS OF GOOD MEN.

But this I muſt ſay, that ſome perſons in an inferior ſtation, are as fit to judge of an edifying ſermon, as ſome of thoſe that are their ſuperiors. Nor need this appear ſtrange, if we only conſider, that acquaintance with polite literature, the knowledge of foreign languages, a deep reach in politics, and acquaintance with all the punctilios of courtly behaviour, are not neceſſary to enable one to form a judgment of the merit of a goſpel ſermon; but only a good acquaintance with the contents of the Engliſh Bible, a ſtock of common ſenſe, and *an honeſt and good heart* ‡.

Another thing I muſt inſiſt on is, that as a preacher is not called merely to edify the patron, but the community at large; ſo the community at large, or their repreſentatives, and they only, can beſt judge whoſe talents are moſt ſuited to their edification.

Leaving the arguments from facts and experience to another letter, without detaining you longer at preſent, I am,

GENTLEMEN,
With much reſpect,
Your moſt humble, and
Moſt obedient ſervant,
PHILANTHROPOS.

‡ Luke, viii. 15.

LETTER XII.

To the Societies at Edinburgh and Glaſgow, conſtituted for obtaining the repeal of the preſent Patronage-law.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING, in the preceding letter, argued the caſe of Patronage and Popular Election from the nature of things, I now appeal to facts and experience. And as this is an invidious topic, I ſhall only touch it very gently. To proceed.

It has been the cuſtom of Patrons to leave the enquiring into the capacity and morals of their *preſentees* wholly to the Preſbytery, to whom alone it belonged, in their opinion, to judge of theſe matters. The Preſbytery, on the other hand, loth to diſoblige the Patron, have generally found abilities, and granted ordination where he had granted a preſentation. Nor have they humoured him only by granting collation to licentiates; but alſo, (when they underſtood how the Patron's pulſe beat,) they have been loth to refuſe licenſe itſelf to a young man that had *his* PROMISE. Several clergymen have had their children or friends to provide for; theſe have ſeen it their *duty* to be good-natured, for fear of raiſing up ill againſt themſelves. A number introduced by patronage have, very naturally, been zealous for a meaſure to which they were ſo much indebted. Thus, through an exceſs of good humour, or what elſe you pleaſe to call it, on the part of both Patron and Preſbytery, the real intereſt of the Church has been too oft neglected between them.

But this is not all; for ſince young men knew that their preferment depended wholly upon their friends intereſt with the Patron, and not upon their perſonal qualifications, there has been a too general remiſſneſs in ſtudies before entering into the miniſtry; and, as a natural conſequence of the laſt, eaſier methods of doing things have been fallen upon after entering. Several toilſome practices, in uſe in former times, have been given up with. That old cuſtom of mandating ſermons * has

* *i. e.* Getting them by heart, ſo as to deliver them without ding.

been

been, pretty generally, given up in the North Country, where there is alſo a great decline of pulpit eloquence.

To all the above we may add, that many Clergymen have, by ſome means or other, loſt their authority; that there has long been an uncommon relaxation of diſcipline in many places, and alſo a neglect of religious duties. Diſguſted with theſe proceedings, above an hundred thouſand Preſbyterians have revolted from the communion of the Church *. Theſe have been the fruits of Patronage.

True it is, a number of pious, able, and worthy men have entered by it; theſe are a bleſſing to the Church: but we do not owe theſe to patronage; for it admitted them, as I may ſay, by chance, and not on account of their worth: and *they* are its greateſt enemies.

As to what would be the conſequence of repealing the Patronage-law, I have given my opinion in Letter I. To what was then ſaid I only add, That as eloquence has, for the moſt part, flouriſhed in free ſtates, [that is, under mixed and popular governments,] and has generally languiſhed under the tyranny and ſlavery that are the attendants on unlimited monarchy and arbitrary power; ſo we may reaſonably preſume, that the effects in the Church will be generally found analogous to thoſe in the ſtate, when under ſimilar forms of government. Free election reſtored would be a ſtrong incitement to the cultivating of pulpit eloquence, and would undoubtedly revive it †. Patronage, on the other hand, is un-

* This calculation is founded on the ſuppoſition that there are 200 Preſbyterian diſſenting congregations (all ſorts included) in Scotland, which is pretty near the truth; and that, taking them one with another, they will conſiſt of 500 members, which is alſo pretty exact: for, though ſeveral of them fall far below that number, conſiſting only of 200 or 300 adult members; yet others, eſpecially in the relief way, conſiſt of ſome thouſands. A late eminent Letter on Patronage (of which below) calculates the Diſſenters at 1,500,000; but I ſuppoſe this is by an error of the preſs, for 150,000: or he muſt count all that have diſſented on account of patronage, though now dead: or again, he muſt count children ordinary hearers, though not in full communion with theſe diſſenters, and all that attend them.

† Nervous and maſculine eloquence (which is the only real eloquence) is of great importance in the pulpit. It would be affronting the reader's underſtanding, to ſuppoſe that he queſtions this: 1 Tim. iv. 14, 15. 2 Tim. ii. 15. Tit. i. 9, *&c.*

friendly to the real intereſts of uſeful learning, and more ſerious ſtudies; yea, even the improvements in polite literature made in our times by ſome Scots Clergymen, are not owing to Patronage, but to other cauſes *.

Gentlemen, I would have treated the bad effects of Patronage more copiouſly, had not this been done already by a more maſterly and judicious pen †. I have only, therefore, to ſubſcribe myſelf, as I am, with the utmoſt ſincerity,

Yours, &c.

PHILANTHROPOS.

LETTER XIII.

To the Societies at Edinburgh and Glaſgow, conſtituted for obtaining the repeal of the preſent Patronage-law.

GENTLEMEN,

IN my former Letters, I have argued the caſe of Patronage and Popular Election, from Scripture, antiquity, and reaſon. I come now, to attempt a ſolution of the objections made to Popular Election. The firſt is, That, ſhould Patronage be aboliſhed, and Popular Election, under any form, be eſtabliſhed, it would deprive the Patron of his right; and that this would be as unjuſt as to rob him of any part of his civil property. To remove this difficulty, I ſhould here enquire into the origin and progreſs of Patronage. This I would have done at more length, had it not been done ſo lately by a much abler hand ‡.

* See Dr Robertſon's excellent Hiſtory of Scotland, at the cloſe.

† See a Letter on Patronage, printed at Glaſgow in 1781, ſigned, *A Preſbyterian*. If I may be allowed to give my opinion, this is the beſt performance on that ſide of the queſtion that has been publiſhed ſince 1712. (and I have read a number on that ſubject, beſide theſe that have lately appeared.) It deſerves to be printed in letters of gold, and ſhould be carefully read by all. The author is unknown to me: but the pamphlet is to be had from John Bryce, Glaſgow.

‡ In the Letter on Patronage, ſigned *A Presbyterian*, printed at Glaſgow 1781, and mentioned in the laſt Note on Letter XII. This Pamphlet contains a brief hiſtory of Patronage, and ſhould be ſtudied by all that take part in an application to Parliament.

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That it originated under Popery is certain; and that, in ſome inſtances, it was founded, as G. C. ſays, on the building or endowing of a Church, or in the contributing to the funds of one otherwiſe poor, muſt alſo be allowed *. The right of Patronage was the lure, which, under Popery, was held out to laymen, to engage them to make donations to the Church, when they had not zeal or ſuperſtition enough to do it without this. But it is much to be doubted, if either the clergy or laity could lawfully alienate their right, or make ſuch a ſale of the churches' immunities, even though they received theſe advantages in exchange. At leaſt, they could not do ſo perpetually and irredeemably. And it is certain, that, in proceſs of time, the Pope and the clergy uſurped the people's right, where there was no pretence on the part of the former, that they had either endowed or founded; the original donations having been made by the people.

At the Reformation in Scotland, the Church-lands, with the rights appended to them, were, in many inſtances, alienated by the biſhops to their own natural children or friends. Part of them were ſeized upon by the nobility and gentry; and the reſt were claimed by the crown. The crown, out of its own ſhare, made various grants of theſe lands and rights to ſubjects that were laymen †. The poſſeſſion of theſe lands and rights was afterwards confirmed to the reſpective parties by the Scotch Parliament.

Another neceſſary remark is, that, through the confuſions occaſioned by the contentions among the Scotch clans, in former and later times; and the ambulatory nature, and fluctuating ſtate of property conſequent thereon; it is certain, that very few of the original lay-patronages are now ſubſiſting, either as conveyed by heritage or ſale.

Upon the whole, then, as the Pope and the clergy ſpoiled the people of their rights; as the King and Nobles, in their turn, ſpoiled the Pope; and as the Nobility

* See a Pamphlet on Patronage, publiſhed in 1770, intitled, An attempt to ſhew that every ſpecies of Patronage is foreign to the nature of the Chriſtian Church.

† For all this, ſee Dr Robertſon's Hiſtory of Scotland, 4th edit. vol. 1. p. 241, 242, on the year 1560; and ſame vol. p. 251, 252, on the year 1561.

and

and Gentry ſpoiled one another; it muſt be evident, that the claims of our modern Patrons are not once in twenty times founded in the endowing of Churches, or in the original right, either as conveyed by heritage or ſale: but (if the truth muſt be told) in violence and rapine, in the ſpoiling and robbing of Churches. So that, in moſt caſes, the people have reaſon to aſk the reſtitution of what was originally wreſted from them ſo very unjuſtly. Far be it from me to delight in aſperity of language: but it muſt unavoidably excite peculiar emotions to ſee G. C. a man of ſo much ſenſe, and who knows all theſe things ſo well, defending Patronage by the arguments here refuted. But, to return.

The whole Patronages in Scotland are ſaid to be about 960: of theſe the crown is ſaid to poſſeſs at preſent 550. Some of theſe fell in to the crown by the forfeited eſtates after 1715 and 1745: ſome of them are no doubt owing to original donations on the part of the crown; but many, if not moſt of them, are the Patronages that belonged to the biſhops, and that were annexed to the Church-lands before the Reformation. The concluſion thence ariſing is obvious, if we attend to what was formerly ſaid.

Againſt all this it will perhaps be ſaid, That though the Patrons had no other title, they have acquired a right by long poſſeſſion; and that, if poſſeſſion did not give a right, eſpecially when confirmed by the higheſt authority in the nation, many of our great men would hold even their landed property by a very precarious tenure, as they acquired it originally in much the ſame way as the laymen did the Church-lands.

But to this it is anſwered, That the caſe is not the ſame. Patronage is the uſurpation of an unalienable right of the people *, and is therefore unlawful in itſelf. This cannot be ſaid of the poſſeſſion of lands or goods: theſe are transferable; and theſe a man may lawfully alienate, not only by ſale, but alſo to obtain peace with an enemy, ſave his own life, recover his liberty, &c.: or, if theſe lands be ſeized on by force, the original proprie-

* That the people's right is unalienable, was proved at the cloſe of Letter V. and in the note upon it.

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tor may confirm an enemy in the poſſeſſion of them, for the ſame or like reaſons. Beſides, Patrons have not enjoyed this right by undiſturbed poſſeſſion. The Church, for more than a century and a half, *viz.* from 1560, till after 1712, kept up a teſtimony againſt it *. The Scotch Parliament, 1690, obliged patrons to ſell this right, or rather deprived them of it, allowing them a compenſation; and the General Aſſembly, to this day, have not formally given up the yearly inſtruction to the Commiſſion to embrace the firſt favourable opportunity of obtaining relief from that bondage.

If it be ſaid, That this is a right confirmed by the Legiſlature: It is anſwered, the ſame Legiſlature can annul it.

Should any doubt whether the Legiſlature itſelf can do ſo: this need not be doubted. The Scotch Parliament, in 1690, actually did ſo; and the Britiſh Parliament has done many other things that would ſeem as difficult. They for a time diſarmed the Highland clans, and uſed the moſt effectual endeavours to check them, and to weaken and break the power of their chiefs, and deſtroy the feudal ſyſtem among them; and all this, without thinking they tranſgreſſed the bounds of duty, when it was found neceſſary for the peace of ſociety, and the good of the nation at large. Again, they they have bought up ſome rights granted to particular families and places. They aboliſhed the regality courts and regalities, even ſuch of them as were heritable †. They abridged the civil juriſdiction of the Barons, and almoſt annihilated their criminal juriſdiction. They have oft laid reſtrictions on trade, and done many other things that at firſt ſeemed difficult. They may, therefore, aboliſh the power of Patrons, by obliging them to ſell their rights, or even diveſting them of it ſimply, without being chargeable with injuſtice, or the abolition of property.

We have ſaid, the Legiſlature may diveſt Patrons of this right, without compenſation (though it is not very probable it will do ſo); becauſe any claims that Patrons

* That is, always while Preſbytery was eſtabliſhed.

† By the Juriſdiction Act 20. Geo. II.

might

might have had from endowing Churches have now ceaſed for upwards of two centuries. For, ſince the time of King James VI. ſtipends have been paid, not out of the Patron's funds, but out of the teinds *. This, at leaſt, has generally been the mode of raiſing ſtipend to the Preſbyterian Clergy. It can be no argument againſt this, that the teinds have, in moſt pariſhes, been valued: It is ſtill the teinds that pay the ſtipend; and the other heritors, as well as the Patron, pay their proportion, and ſometime more than he. Yea, ſome Patrons have not a foot of land in the pariſhes whereof they are Patrons. From all which, the nullity of the right of Patrons, as Patrons, whether they have land in the pariſh or not, clearly appears; ſince they pay ſtipend at preſent, not as Patrons, but as heritors. And the ſame is to be ſaid of building churches, manſes, &c. as of paying ſtipend. The only perſons that appear to have a title to be refunded, are they who have bought Patronages in a dependence on the preſent Patronage law; and *their* claim to a compenſation ſhall not be diſputed.

Whether the Legiſlature will aboliſh Patronage or not, can only be known by trial. But when we conſider that Patronage is ſuch a groſs impoſition on the other heritors that are not Patrons, who have no vote in the nomination of a miniſter, though they often pay moſt of his ſtipend; when we remember that Patronage was aboliſhed after the Revolution; and that the reſtoring of Patronage, in 1712, was a direct infringement of the Union-ſettlement, a fundamental article of which was, that it confirmed to the Church of Scotland, for ever, all her privileges that ſhe was put in poſſeſſion of by the Revolution Parliament, of which freedom from the yoke of patronage was one; and, in fine, when we conſider the much diſturbance that this law has occaſioned, we cannot but hope, that a Legiſlature, ſo friendly to the liberties of the people as the preſent is, will redreſs their grievances, and repeal that obnoxious ſtatute †.

But

* Encyclopæd. Britan. on the law of Scotland, tit. 5. art. II. where this is to be ſeen at large, and much more to the preſent point in the other articles.

† See the Rev. Mr Hardy's Addreſs to the clergy of the popular intereſt.—That gentleman, whoſe opinion muſt have weight,

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But, it will be ſaid, if the power of Patrons be aboliſhed, will not the right of election devolve upon the heritors ſolely, as they pay the ſtipend * ? And what claim can the *people* have here ? To this it is commonly anſwered, That the *people*, and not the *heritors*, pay the ſtipend ; which, it is ſaid, appears by this, that many tenants pay their quota of ſtipend diſtinct from their landrent ; that when ſtipends are augmented, the additional ſtipend is laid upon the tenants ; and, in fine, that when heritors ſell their lands, and others buy them, the ſtipend is not paid for as a part of the yearly rent, but is always conſidered as a ſeparate burden upon the lands, and deducted from what is paid in by the tenants, which, it is ſaid, plainly ſhews, that the right of election, in the preſent caſe, belongs to the people as well as to the heritors. But G. C. has endeavoured † to overthrow the argument for the people's right from their paying of the ſtipend. He ſuppoſes the Patron heritor of a whole pariſh, and that, at the expiration of his tenants leaſes, he takes all his lands into his own hand, (which he may undoubtedly do if he pleaſe) ; and becauſe in this caſe, when the tenants are all removed, the miniſter will ſtill get the ſame ſtipend as when the lands were all ſet in tack, he concludes, and, I muſt own, very juſtly, that the ſtipend is a burden on the lands, [he might have ſaid on the poſſeſſors of the lands, as the heritor comes to be in the caſe ſuppoſed,] and not on the people. The ſtrict truth in the caſe is, that the ſtipend is a burden on the fruits, or produce of the lands, and is paid from the teinds ; it therefore follows on the poſſeſſion or cultivation of the lands. But G. C. does not ſurely mean, that

as he is ſo learned and ingenious a man, and as he belongs to what is called the Court Party in the national church, is full of the hope that the Legiſlature will repeal the Patronage-law, if proper application be made for that purpoſe. It is earneſtly intreated, that every perſon who takes concern in the preſent debate will procure either a copy or a reading of Mr Hardy's ingenious performance. The people will ſee there many things that do not occur to themſelves. The pamphlet is to be had at Edinburgh, and from A. Angus and Son Aberdeen.

* This would multiply the number of electors, and would therefore be a leſs evil than the preſent mode.

† See letter II.

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the ſtipend comes out of the Patron's or heritors' pockets. His example does not prove this: nor could it do ſo, unleſs in the caſe ſuppoſed, of an heritor's taking his lands into his own hand, he could take a liberty to pay no ſtipend at all. This would prove it indeed, but nothing elſe. But it will be ſaid, are not the teinds the heritor's property? By no means; no more than they are the people's: ſo far to the contrary, that ſince the time of King *James* VI. in whoſe reign the ſtipends were appointed to be paid out of the teinds, the heritors have, from time to time, got their teinds valued, and have paid an equivalent in money or grain. But it will be ſtill ſaid, Who gave the clergy a right to the teinds? To this it is anſwered, the ſame Sovereign and Legiſlature that either granted to the heritors their lands, or confirmed them in the poſſeſſion thereof; they granted or confirmed them to them with this burden upon them. It may be further anſwered, That this is an ancient Scripture uſage; that it has been the cuſtom of all nations, Pagan and Chriſtian, thus to ſupport their prieſts; that the teinds are but a ſmall part of what belonged to the Church under Popery, the reſt having been, at the Reformation, ſeized on or recovered (and that very juſtly) by the Crown and by the lay-intereſt; and that they never were the property of the laity ſince the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity in the iſland.

Let no perſon be ſurpriſed at what has been ſaid with reſpect to landed property. We all know, or ſhould know, that all ſubjects ultimately hold their lands of the Crown (though ſome of them hold immediately of a ſubject-ſuperior;) that they do ſo is clear from the forfeiture of their lands in the caſe of treaſon, rebellion, *&c.* We alſo know, that lands are ſubject to ſuch burdens as the Legiſlature may lay upon them; and that no more is, in ſtrict ſpeaking, the property of the landed intereſt, than what is clear, after deducting theſe burdens. The payment of ſtipend, is then as really a tax impoſed by the government on lands, they being the moſt fixed and immoveable property in the country, as what is called the ceſs or land-tax is; and it can be no more reckoned the property of the heritors than the other can be.

The conſequence of the whole is, that the ſame government

vernment that impoſed this tax can confer the right of electing the miniſters ſupported by the tax on whom it pleaſes, or otherwiſe diſpoſe of the right in the way that ſhall be found moſt agreeable to duty, and conducive to the good of the community.

Thus, Gentlemen, I flatter myſelf, I have been enabled to remove the objections againſt popular election, that would ſeem to ariſe from the claims of the patrons and heritors. In all which, as I have to my knowledge ſtudied the utmoſt ſincerity and impartiality, I hope I ſhall have your approbation*: which will be a heart-elt ſatisfaction to him, who is, with the utmoſt regard,

Gentlemen,

Your moſt humble, and
moſt obedient ſervant,
PHILANTHROPOS.

LETTER XIV.

To the Societies at Edinburgh and Glaſgow, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

I Am now about to put a concluſion to a correſpondence, the tediouſneſs of which can only be excuſed by the importance of its ſubject. Having already eſtabliſhed the rights of *the people* from Scripture, from antiquity, and from reaſon; and having anſwered the moſt material objections againſt them; would it not ſeem, that

* Perhaps ſome may think, that by the iſſue of this argument too much power is aſcribed to the government. But if what is ſaid be truth, which is the profeſſed ſearch of the writer of this letter, that cannot be blamed.—And even his opponents muſt do him the juſtice to own, that he at leaſt attempts to reaſon fairly on all topics.—However, no perſon need be apprehenſive from the government's having ſo much power in this caſe; it muſt be ſo in all religious eſtabliſhments as conſidered in a civil view. But

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that my work is at an end, and that I have only to exhort you to go on ſteadily in the good work which you have begun? But a queſtion, not the leaſt difficult of thoſe that have been treated, remains yet to be anſwered: and, without a ſatisfactory anſwer to it, much of our former pains are to little purpoſe.

The important and no leſs difficult queſtion is, *What plan ſhall be adopted, ſhould the Patronage-law be repealed?* To attempt an anſwer to this, is the deſign of the preſent letter.

It will readily occur to yourſelves, Gentlemen, that it is much to be doubted, whether the plan or plans, that may moſt anſwer the wiſhes of the people, may equally meet the inclination and opinion of our civil rulers; and thus, though good, or even the very beſt in themſelves, whether they will, in preſent circumſtances, be practicable or not? Same time you are too ſagacious not to ſee the neceſſity of attending to this in the preſent caſe; and that we ſhould act the part of fools, to loſe, by graſping at an impoſſibility, what we might really obtain.

But granting that we had every thing at our own making, I am afraid it muſt be ſaid, That no plan can be invented that will be entirely free from every inconvenience. Heaven's own inſtitutions are liable, through man's corruption, to perverſion and abuſe. No plan will pleaſe all parties: nor will any plan entirely prevent undue influence. The beſt plan here is the one attended with the feweſt evils, and that promiſes the moſt good upon the whole. Had we things at our own will, we ſurely ſhould wiſh to ſee popular election in its utmoſt latitude eſtabliſhed. And we could firmly believe, that the evils attending it (which are owing to man's imperfection, not the inſtitution) would be more than counter-

THE PEOPLE are the root, and fountain of all power; the government is only the truſtee of the people. It is, therefore, bound to manage all the people's concerns, that are truſted to it, for their good. Beſide that, where Chriſtianity, and eſpecially the Proteſtant faith is eſtabliſhed, there are certain inſtitutions reſpecting even the external polity of the Church, which all, from the higheſt to the loweſt, are bound to pay a reſpect to, from the authority of the great founder of that religion, to whom all owe ſubjection.

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balanced by the good. But, perhaps, we might diſagree among ourſelves, about what ſhould be the extent of popular election, and what the preciſe plan on which it ſhould be conducted. So many difficulties, and ſo great do occur here, that we might be altogether diſcouraged to proceed, did not the very great importance of our object outweigh every other conſideration. But, as ſucceſs in our attempt will more than compenſate all, we ought not to grudge any travel, or ſpare any pains.

To give you what aſſiſtance I can, Gentlemen, I ſhall give my opinion on the plan of the New-Teſtament Scriptures; I ſhall produce the plans of ſeveral Preſbyterian Churches; I ſhall point out the plan that ſeems to me moſt practicable in our circumſtances; and conclude with ſome reaſons for unanimity in your preſent attempt.

To begin with the plan laid down in the New-Teſtament Scriptures. Though my opinion of this has been ſufficiently explicated in ſome of the former letters, yet, without entering a-new into the argument, it may not be improper to ſum up or collect the ſame here. Chriſt's kingdom, then, in my opinion, is a free and independent kingdom, *a kingdom not of this world*§; and therefore not ſubordinated in its ſpiritual concerns to the kingdoms of this world. It has a complete ſcheme of government, of officers, laws, and ordinances appointed for it, diſtinct from thoſe of the civil ſtate. Worldly wealth and power are ſo far from intitling to greater ſpiritual privileges in it, that they do not intitle *the rich man* even to a ſeat in a place of worſhip, to the excluſion of *a poor diſciple*†. The only thing that moſt diſcriminates here, is a perſon's being poſſeſſed of theſe moral qualifications and endowments, which are, or ought to be, the characteriſtic of the ſubjects of this kingdom. In this kingdom, which is the Goſpel Church, the power of examining the candidates for the miniſtry, and of ordaining them, always belonged to thoſe that were office-bearers already; though ſome judgment

§ John xviii. 36.
† James ii. 1, 2, 3, 4——

upon their qualifications ſeems alſo to have been allowed to the people. But the power of electing and nominating them to a particular charge, was ever the privilege of the people; though not (as would ſeem) to the entire excluſion of the clergy.

Even when the deſtination of an office was general and indefinite, as was that of the ſucceſſor of Judas, the people made the choice. They behoved, of conſequence, to do it more naturally, when one was to be aſſigned to them as their own fixed paſtor in a particular diſtrict. It is certain enough, that the members of one church never interfered in the nomination of a paſtor to another church ‡. The perſons that were to attend his miniſtry, were the only perſons who took a concern here ‖. While there were no office-bearers in ſome particular churches, as was the caſe in theſe, Acts xiv. 23. the power behoved, in the nature of the thing, to be exerciſed by the people only, under the direction of the Apoſtles. But whether upon their having a number of office-bearers, paſtors, ruling-elders, and deacons appointed them, the power of nominating their ſucceſſors, or aſſiſtants, devolved wholly upon theſe office-bearers, is a queſtion not ſo eaſily determined; but, from the election of the ſucceſſor of Judas, and from the judgment allowed all Chriſtians as to the qualifications of miniſters *, I am apt to think not. In the former caſe, there were eleven Apoſtles already; yet *the people* choſe the twelfth. It is not to be ſuppoſed, that, in theſe primitive times, elections often came to a vote, in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word; nor that all perſons had equal influence in determining them. It is rather probable, (as has been the caſe in ſuch matters in every age, and will be ſo to the end of the world), that a few of the moſt judicious members of theſe congregations generally led the way, and that the reſt followed. And it is one of

‡ Acts xiv. 23. They are ſaid to appoint by ſuffrage, elders, κατ' ἐκκλησίαν, *to (or for) them, Church by Church.*

‖ Non-reſiding heritors, and thoſe of the Epiſcopal communion, ought not to be allowed to vote in a call.

* See cloſe of letter V.

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the chief advantages of popular governments, civil and eccleſiaſtical, that they allow perſons of eminent talents a greater influence, and open more readily a path to theſe ſtations, and that uſefulneſs, for which great talents are deſigned by the all-wiſe Giver thereof. This, I ſay, is one great benefit attending popular governments, amidſt all the turbulency and confuſion to which they are generally ſubject. But, ſhould it be queſtioned, whether the Apoſtolic pattern of chooſing paſtors was deſigned for after-imitation in all ſucceſſive ages, we have a two-fold anſwer to give: *Firſt*, That this is allowed to be the caſe in other matters; Apoſtolic example is conſidered as having the force of a precept: And again, we have ſhewed clear ground for popular election from Scripture precepts binding in every age §, even though theſe examples were not to be underſtood as having the force of a precept. From theſe precepts it appears, that all Chriſtians are not allowed only, but commanded to judge for themſelves in this matter, and, of conſequence, to chooſe for themſelves. Nor is this the duty of *the men* only, but alſo of *the other ſex*; who, as they have ſouls, muſt be equally accountable for them as the men.—Do not be ſurpriſed, Gentlemen, when I ſay, that *women* muſt chooſe their own paſtors. Women cannot be ſaved by implicit faith more than others, and muſt not therefore be led by it: but they muſt *try the ſpirits*, and *beware of falſe prophets*, as well as the other ſex. But it was never cuſtomary for women *to ſpeak in the church*, or to vote in public matters; nor is their doing ſo countenanced by the Scripture: it is rather recommended to them, that they ſhould expreſs their opinion *to their huſbands*, or friends *at home*; which will often have weight with them, and will be ſufficient to anſwer every purpoſe in the preſent caſe. But it will be ſaid, that theſe Scripture-precepts do only ſecure to the people A NEGATIVE, that is, that no miniſter, that they judge either unedifying, erroneous, or impious, be thruſt upon them againſt their will; and that they do not ſo clearly give to the people the right of NOMINATION, which is *the chief thing* here. It will be farther ſaid, that there may be a number of pious, and well-qualified candidates, againſt none

§ See cloſe of letter V.

of whom an objection can be made on the foot of theſe precepts. The queſtion then will be, who is to determine which of theſe ſhall fill the vacancy? And I doubt not, but it will be ſaid, that the liberty ſtill given to the people of Scotland by the moderating of *a concurring call*, and ſerving of *an edict*, amounts to all that is contained in theſe precepts. To theſe things it is anſwered, that theſe precepts are clear for *a negative* to the people at the leaſt; that where a negative muſt be allowed, it is much better to allow a vote in the nomination; that, as was formerly ſaid, the right of choice undoubtedly follows the right of judgment; and that we have Scripture example to warrant us in giving the nomination to the people. What we have now to add is, that as this right is, in the New Teſtament, accounted to belong to the people, if a public election, conducted on this plan, ſhould come to a vote, it muſt be determined by *a majority*; and if it be aſked, who ſhall vote? The anſwer is, *All the male members of the congregation, who have a good meaſure of ſound knowledge, whoſe morals are unexceptionable, and whoſe converſation is ſuch as becometh the goſpel*; all of theſe that are *adults*, MAY VOTE. Or, the election may be determined by the votes of a number of the moſt judicious members of the congregation, choſen by the people to repreſent them, and act for them in this matter. Or it may be determined by the votes of the kirk-ſeſſion; but, in this laſt caſe, *the people at large* muſt always be allowed a negative over the elders †; for according to the Scriptures, THE POWER IS RADICALLY IN THE PEOPLE. The elders, then, can only act in this matter as repreſenting them; they are ſtill accountable to them, and cannot force a paſtor upon them againſt the will of the major part of the congregation. Thus, Gentlemen, I have given you my opinion on the plan pointed out in the New-Teſtament Scriptures. I ſhall next produce the plans of ſeveral Preſbyterian Churches.

In the Proteſtant Church of France, the right of nomination appears to have been veſted in the clergy, and the elders, met in judicatory: The ſame appears to have

† What a negative is, was explained before.

been

been the eaſe in Geneva †. The compilers of the ſecond Book of the Diſcipline of the Church of Scotland, gave the right of nomination and election to the *elderſhip*; which was what they had, at that time, for both Preſbytery and kirk-ſeſſion ‖. [They had but one kind of court, for the two which we have.] But in all theſe caſes, the people were allowed a negative; ſo that no paſtor, though ever ſo worthy, was to be impoſed on them againſt their will, or without their conſent. And in the firſt book of the Diſcipline of our own Church, the election, and, of conſequence, the nomination, is given to the people, and only the examination is reſerved to the clergy **.

The Weſtminſter Aſſembly, who ſeem to have underſtood this point as well as any that ever have had it under conſideration, appear to allow ſome latitude in it. They ſuppoſe, that a candidate may be either nominated to the Preſbytery by the people, or recommended otherwiſe; that he muſt preach to the people ſeve-

† See a large quotation from L'Arogue's Conformity of the Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline of the Church of France with primitive antiquity, in the letter on Patronage, ſigned *A Preſbyterian*, printed 1781, pages 33, 34.

‖ "This ordinary and outward calling hath two parts, election and ordination. Election is the chooſing out of a perſon "or perſons, moſt able, to the office that vakes, by the judg"ment of the elderſhip, and conſent of the congregation, to "which the perſon or perſons ſhall be appointed." *Second Book of Diſcipline, Ch.* 3

"In the order of election is to be eſchewed, that any perſon "be intruded in any offices of the kirk, contrary to the will of "the congregation to which they are appointed, or without the "voice of the elderſhip." *Same book and chap. a little below the former quotation.*

"The power of election of them, who bear eccleſiaſtical "charges, pertains to this kind of aſſembly [*i. e.* to elderſhips, "explained as above,] within their bounds, &c. *Second Book of Diſcipline*, Chap. 7.

The compilers of this book plead for the free election of miniſters, and condemn Patronages at conſiderable length. Chap. 12.

** "The lawful vocation ſtandeth in the election of the peo"ple, examination of the miniſtry, and admiſſion by them "both." *Sum of the firſt book of Diſcipline, Art.* 4. *at the beginning.*

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ral days, and muſt converſe with them, that they may have ſome trial of his gifts; and that the people muſt, by a competent number of commiſſioners, choſen by themſelves, give in their opinion of him to the Preſbytery, and all this before his ordination be appointed: And that the Preſbytery are to proceed to ordination or not, according as the candidate ſhall either be approved by the congregation, or diſapproved for ſufficient reaſons §§.

When Patronage was aboliſhed by the Eſtates of the Scotch Parliament, 1649, and when the General Aſſembly were deſired by them to give in a plan, the Aſſembly gave the nomination to the kirk-ſeſſion, but allowed the congregation what was nearly equivalent to a negative over them ††.

The act of King William aboliſhing Patronages in Scotland, 1690, gave the nomination to a conjunct meeting of heritors and elders, the heritors being Proteſtants, and heritors of that pariſh: But, even then, the conſent of the people was requiſite; for the perſon nominated was to be publicly propoſed to them, and, if they did not approve of him, they were to give in their reaſons to the Preſbytery, who were to judge finally thereupon ‡‡.

In

§§ See Form of Church-government, on the head of *Ordination of Miniſters.*

†† See act of Parliament aboliſhing the Patronages of kirks, March 9. 1649.—And the Aſſembly's Directory for election of Miniſters, founded upon it, Auguſt 4. 1649. They are both to be ſeee in the collection of acts bound in with the Scotch, Geneva, and Weſtminſter Confeſſions.

‡‡ I have here tranſcribed part of the act of Parliament, July 19. 1690. "Conſidering that the power of preſenting miniſters "to vacant congregations hath been greatly abuſed, and is in- "convenient to be continued in this realm,"——"do there- "fore, with advice and conſent of the Eſtates of Parliament, "hereby diſcharge, caſs, annul, and make void, the foreſaid "power heretofore uſed by any Patron, of preſenting miniſters to "any kirk now vacant."——"Do ſtatute and declare, that "in caſe of the vacancy of any particular church, or for ſupply- "ing the ſame with a miniſter, the heritors of the ſaid paroch "(being Proteſtants) and the elders, are to name and propoſe "the man to the whole congregation, to be either approven or "diſapproven

In fine, among Preſbyterian Diſſenters in Scotland, and (ſo far as I can learn, from ſome of their late authors) in England, the people at large are the electors.

I ſhould proceed now, in the *next* place, to give my opinion as to the plan, that is like to be moſt practicable in our circumſtances. And to be brief, as becomes one addreſſing perſons of more knowledge than himſelf, if we had all things at our own making, we would certainly wiſh the eſtabliſhed form of electing miniſters to be brought as near to the New-Teſtament model as poſſible: But when we ſee, as we plainly may at preſent, that this cannot in all probability be obtained, it will be our wiſdom to make the beſt terms we can; and not loſe what we might really obtain, by graſping at what we cannot obtain. Let us only conſider, how great a benefit it would be to the nation, to have the Patronage law aboliſhed, WHICH HAS BEEN THE CHIEF SOURCE OF ALL OUR EVILS, not merely of our diviſions, but of our corruptions. Let us alſo think, that if once a thorough breach be made in the foundation, the whole ſuperſtructure will gradually decay. (You will underſtand me, Gentlemen.) One ſtep alſo may make way for another in due time. When perſons have all things in their power, they ought not to ſtop ſhort, even in the beginning of a reformation: But the caſe is otherwiſe, when they have not. I repeat it once more, let us only conſider how great a benefit it would be to the nation, to have the preſent Patronage law aboliſhed!

With ſubmiſſion, then, Gentlemen, I would propoſe, that a revival of the act of King William, 1690, ſhould be applied for. For this you have a precedent; and, for this, you may be ſaid to have law upon your ſide. King William's memory is profeſſedly dear to our modern *patriots;* and they ought, on that account, to pay the more reſpect to this act.

" diſapproven by them. And if they diſapprove, that the diſ-
" approvers give in their reaſons, to the effect the affair may be
" cognoſced upon by the Preſbytery of the bounds." The ſame act ordains every paroch [pariſh] to compenſate the Patron for his right, by paying him the ſum of 600 merks, each heritor, including the Patron, according to his valued rent.

It

It will be objected, that it was an act of Aſſembly, ſimilar to this, that occaſioned the ſeceſſion from the national Church. But this is a very great miſtake. That act did not refer to ſettlements in general ‖‖, but only to theſe inſtances, in which the Patron either waved the exerciſe of his right; or again, by not preſenting within the ſix months appointed by law, loſt his right for that time; which right, of conſeqnence, devolved upon the Preſbytery. It was certainly moſt iniquous in the General Aſſembly, to ſpoil the people of their rights, even in theſe few caſes, in which they had it in their power to allow them to uſe them. Beſide, in this act, 1732, that occaſioned the Seceſſion, there was not (ſo far as I can find) a negative allowed to the congregation; which, or ſomething equivalent to it, was allowed by the act 1690.

As to the *ſecond* plan, *in a late celebrated addreſs to the clergy of the popular intereſt*, I have only to obſerve, that the plan of voting by delegation or repreſentation, is in itſelf good, and was propoſed by ſome, as far back as 1767, or 1768. But that Gentleman's plan, though exceedingly well digeſted, throws too much weight to the ſide of the gentry, and too little to the ſide of the commonalty; which, for the reaſons given, Letters XI. and XII. ought not to be done. Nevertheleſs, that plan is preferable to the preſent patronage law *. But ſhould the plan of voting by delegation be adopted, I would humbly propoſe, that the vote of Patrons ſhould be ſtruck off the plan, and that the delegates ſhould be, one from the heritors of the pariſh, who are of the communion of the national church, one from the elders, and one from heads of families. In this caſe there would be no occaſion for allowing the congrega-

‖‖ For theſe were ſtill made according to the Patronage-law.

* It was once intended to have tranſcribed the whole of that Reverend Gentleman's plan, and to have inſerted it here: It was alſo deſigned to have copied a number of pages of his pamphlet, particularly from page 4th to page 21ſt, and to have ſubjoined them by way of appendix. But, on ſecond thoughts, it was judged more proper to refer the reader to the book itſelf.—See an Addreſs to the Clergy of the popular intereſt, by the Rev. Thomas Hardy.

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tion a negative; and the odd number (which might, in the caſe of the boroughs, be increaſed to five, in the manner propoſed in the foreſaid addreſs) would, as before, ordinarily enſure a deciſion. As to the boroughs, at leaſt all of them where the right of preſentation is veſted in the Town-council, ſhould the propoſed reformation as to the election of their Magiſtracy and their Repreſentatives in Parliament take effect, it will go well nigh to remove the corruptions in their eccleſiaſtical ſtate alſo.

To the above propoſal of reviving the act 1690, I ſhall only add, that however little claim Patrons may have in juſtice, yet it is highly improbable, either that they will relinquiſh their title, or that the Parliament will diveſt them of it, without a ſufficient compenſation. I humbly think, then, it would be quite vain to propoſe their doing ſo, on any other terms.

But, to have done, Gentlemen, there are two great objects which you had need to have always in your eye, and which I would conjure you by all that is ſacred to attend to; and they are, unanimity among yourſelves, and perſeverance. If theſe be not attended to, your preſent attempt will evaniſh in ſmoke; you will effect nothing: But if you pay a due attention to theſe, it is not improbable, that you will be the honoured inſtruments of delivering your country from the worſt ſpecies of ſlavery.

That the Almighty Governor of the world may bleſs your attempt with ſucceſs, is, and, through grace, ſhall be the conſtant prayer of,

Gentlemen,

Your moſt humble, and
moſt obedient ſervant,
PHILANTHROPOS.

P. S. It is amazing that no more congregations in the north country have joined you. It is hoped, that thoſe of them that are well affected to the cauſe, will do ſo without loſs of time.

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